Marcus Gage

CELESTINA.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

By CHARLOTTE SMITH.

VOL. I.

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MAR

CELESTINA.

CHAPTER I.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY was, at the age of thirty, left a widow, with a ſon and a daughter, of whom ſhe was extremely fond, and to whoſe education ſhe entirely devoted herſelf. George Willoughby, her ſon, had been placed at Eton by his father, but attended by a private tutor, a man of ſenſe and learning, who was diſtantly related to their family. When he was about thirteen, a fever from which he narrowly eſcaped, ſo injured his conſtitution, that his mother was directed by his phyſicians to take him to the South of Europe. Thither ſhe and her daughter, with Mr. Everard, accompanied him. A few months completely reſtored his health; and they then went all together to Geneva; where, after a ſhort reſidence, ſhe left her ſon to purſue his ſtudies under the care of Mr. Everard; and with her

daughter Matilda, then near eight years old, ſhe fixed herſelf for ſome time at Hieres, on the coaſt of Provence; a town with whoſe beauty ſhe had been much ſtruck four or five years before, when, to divert her concern for the loſs of her huſband, ſhe had made a tour of ſome months through France and Italy.

Matilda was placed in a convent, for the purpoſes of inſtruction; and there ſhe became the play-fellow of a little girl almoſt three years younger, who was known among the Nuns by the name of *la petite Celeſtine*. The fondneſs which ſoon ſubſiſted between her and Matilda introduced her of courſe to Mrs. Willoughby, who was at firſt ſight charmed with her beauty; and after a few interviews, ſo delighted with her infantine careſſes, that ſhe became as anxious to ſee her every day as ſhe was to ſee her own child. Her countenance, with that blooming delicacy which the French diſtinguiſh by calling it "*le "vrai teint Anglois*," had all that animation which is more uſually found among the natives of the ſouth of Europe; yet this ſpirited expreſſion often melted into ſoftneſs ſo inſinuating, that it was difficult to ſay, whether penſive tenderneſs or ſparkling vivacity was the moſt predominant; or whether it was the lovelineſs of her little form and face, or the enchantment of her manners, which made her ſo very attractive, that the very ſervants who ſaw her with Matilda became ſo fond of her, as never to carry her back to the convent, after a viſit to their lady, but with reluctance and regret.

The Nuns, however, with whom ſhe lived, ſeemed, either from ſeeing her conſtantly,

or

or for want of taſte, to be quite inſenſible of perfections which won every other heart. They treated her ſometimes with harſhneſs, and always with indifference; ſo that to be with Mrs. Willoughby, ſoon became the greateſt happineſs the little Celeſtina could enjoy. Mrs Willoughby found an equal pleaſure in returning her affection; and was ſometimes moved even to tears, when happening to careſs Matilda, the other amiable child would approach as if to ſhare her tenderneſs, take her hand, look innocently in her face, and ſay with a ſigh, "*Helas! que n'ai je auſſi une Maman* *!"

Theſe artleſs expreſſions, and the coldneſs with which the ſiſterhood treated their infant penſioner, raiſed in Mrs. Willoughby a great deſire to know to whom the child belonged: but every attempt to gain information was at firſt repreſſed by ſo much reſerve, that ſhe almoſt deſpaired of being gratified. At length however ſhe received a hint, that by the ſkilful application of means equally potent in Courts or Convents, ſhe might learn all the Nuns knew; and in conſequence of purſuing this hint, ſhe was informed, that the laſt Superior of the houſe, who had been dead two years, had received Celeſtina into it when only a few months old, as a child whoſe birth it was of the utmoſt conſequence to conceal: that only the Superior herſelf, and her Confeſſor, who was alſo dead, had ever known to whom ſhe belonged; every trace of which ſecret had by them been ſo carefully obliterated, that

* "Alas! why have not I a Mama too!"

after the deceaſe of both, every attempt at diſcovery had been ineffectual. It was believed that a conſiderable ſum of money had been received as the price of ſecrecy, and as a proviſion for the child; but it had never been carried to account, or any part of it appropriated to the uſe of the community in general, who now conſequently murmured at the neceſſity they were under, as they ſaid, *par charité, et pour l'amour de Dieu,* * to ſupport *la petite Celeſtine* for life: but they added, that as ſoon as ſhe was old enough to take the vows, ſhe muſt become a Nun, and fill one of the inferior offices of the convent, ſince ſhe had no friends or money to pay for being on a higher footing.

The pity excited by this account, added to the ſenſibility with which, infant as ſhe was, ſhe felt her own ſituation; her tender attachment to her benefactreſs, and to Matilda, and the ſenſe and ſweetneſs viſible in all ſhe ſaid and did, procured for her, in the tender and generous heart of Mrs. Willoughby, an intereſt little ſhort of what ſhe felt for Matilda herſelf. Every hour increaſed this intereſt; till after a ſtay of eighteen months at Hieres, during which ſhe had ſeen her almoſt every day, ſhe found, in reflecting on her departure, that ſhe ſhould be really unhappy the reſt of her life, if ſhe returned to England, and left this amiable child to a fate ſo melancholy in itſelf, and ſo unworthy of the promiſe of perfection given by her infancy. Having once entertained the idea of taking her to England, it ſoon became

* Through charity, and for the love of God.

too

too pleaſing to be relinquiſhed. There were however great difficulties in the way. Though the community complained of Celeſtina as a burden to them, they made, as they declared, a point of conſcience, not to part with her to an heretic; and the more ſolicitous Mrs. Willoughby became, the more they declaimed againſt the ſin it would be, to hazard the ſoul of *la petite Celeſtine* for the ſake of any worldly advantage. While the matter was yet in debate, George Willoughby and Mr. Everard, who had been ſent for that the whole family might return to England together, arrived; and the latter finding how much Mrs. Willoughby deſired to become the ſole protectreſs of the little orphan, prevailed with Father Angelo, the preſent confeſſor, to remove at once all the ſcruples he had been inſtrumental in raiſing: in a word, Mr. Everard uſed the argument to which Monks, in deſpite of their profeſſions of poverty, are not more inſenſible than the reſt of mankind; and Mrs. Willoughby having left a certificate of her having taken Celeſtina out of the convent, a promiſe to educate her without influencing her to change her religion, and to provide for her, together with a direction where ſhe might, in caſe of enquiry, be found, was permitted to carry with her, from Hieres, the lovely little French girl, who was from that hour put on an equal footing with her own daughter, and whom ſhe ſeemed as tenderly to love.

After an abſence of between three and four years, Mrs. Willoughby and her family returned to England; where to all her friends, who were generally ſtruck with the beauty and elegance of her adopted child, ſhe related, without reſerve,

reſerve, the little hiſtory of their accidental attachment.

George Willoughby now in his ſeventeenth year, wat ſent to Cambridge: his tutor retired to a ſmall living, which had fallen near his eſtate in the Weſt of England, ſince his abſence, and to which his mother, as patroneſs in his minority, had preſented this excellent and amiable man.

Mrs. Willoughby uſually paſſed the winters in London; where maſters of muſic, drawing, dancing, and languages, attended her two girls, for ſo ſhe equally termed Matilda and her little friend:——their ſummers were divided between public places and Alſtone (or Alveſtone, as it was ſpelt), an eſtate between Sidmouth and Exeter, of which her huſband had been ſo fond, that he had hurt his fortune by the large ſums he had expended on its improvement. This attachment George ſeemed to inherit; and in compliment to him, his mother always paſſed the vacations there: Willoughby himſelf having no pleaſure ſo great as in talking and thinking of the happineſs he ſhould enjoy, when he ſhould become maſter of Alſtone, and ſee his mother and ſiſter, of whom he was extremely fond, ſettled there with him for the greateſt part of every year. Mrs. Willoughby, whoſe love for him might have been ſaid to border on weakneſs, if it had been poſſible to diſcover any exceſs in the attachment of a mother to a ſon ſo uncommonly deſerving, had always encouraged the inclination he had from his infancy betrayed for this his paternal ſeat: though his little projects often gave her pain; for ſhe knew, what ſhe had with more tender-

tenderneſs than prudence ſtudiouſly concealed from him, that his father's affairs were at his death ſo much embarraſſed, as to render it doubtful, whether a minority of near thirteen years would ſo far clear his eſtates, as to enable him at the end of that period to reſide in this favourite place, with the ſplendour and hoſpitality for which his anceſtors had for centuries been eminent. The laſt Mr. Willoughby had indeed continued the ſame line of conduct in the country; but his manner of living in town had been quite unlike that of his prudent and plainer anceſtors; who had but juſt recovered his eſtate, when it was tranſmitted to him, from the injuries it had received by their adherence to Charles the Firſt; during whoſe unfortunate reign, they had ſold ſome part of their extenſive poſſeſſions, and had been plundered of more. His grandfather and great-grandfather had nearly retrieved the whole of the eſtate round Alverſtone, where they piqued themſelves on loſing none of the family conſequence; but the manners of the times in which he lived, and a diſpoſition gay and volatile, had led the laſt poſſeſſor into expences, which, if they did not oblige him to ſell, had obliged him to mortgage great part of this, as well as all his other eſtates; and being charged at his death with twelve hundred a year to his widow, and the intereſt of ten thouſand pounds given to his daughter, they ſlowly and with difficulty produced, under the management of very careful executors, little more than ſufficient to pay ſuch charges, and the intereſt of the money for which they were mortgaged.

Mrs.

Mrs. Willoughby however was unwilling to interrupt the felicity of her ſon's happieſt hours, by repreſenting to him a dreary proſpect of the future; eſpecially as ſhe thought that future might, as it advanced, become brighter; and that it was poſſible all his gay viſions might be realized. He had a great uncle, far advanced in life, and very rich, who, though the late Mr. Willoughby had diſobliged him, might ſhe thought, through mere family pride, give to the ſon, what he had often declared the father ſhould never poſſeſs. Her brother, Lord Caſtlenorth, was the laſt male of his illuſtrious race: he had only a daughter; and an increaſe of his family becoming every day more improbable, he had concerted with his ſiſter, even while George (who was younger than his daughter) was yet a child, how the family might be reſtored by a union of its two remaining branches.

The good ſenſe of Mrs. Willoughby had not entirely ſaved her from family pride; and this project, which the ſituation of her ſon's fortune rendered doubly deſirable, had by degrees taken ſuch poſſeſſion of her mind, that nothing would have made her more unhappy, than ſuſpecting it might not take effect. After her return with her family from France, ſhe had an interview with her brother, Lord Caſtlenorth, who was then in England (though his health occaſioned him for the moſt part to reſide abroad,) and it was then agreed with him, or rather with Lady Caſtlenorth, whoſe will was his law, that if the young people liked each other, of which they hardly ſuffered themſelves to doubt, the match ſhould take place as ſoon as young Willoughby became

became of age, who was then to aſſume the name of Fitz-Hayman, and in whoſe favour, when united with the ſole heireſs of the family, there was little doubt of procuring the ſucceſſion to the title. Willoughby, who was yet ignorant of this propoſed arrangement, had accompanied his mother in her viſit: but far from feeling any partiality for his couſin, he had hardly taken any notice of her, and had paſſed all thoſe hours when common civility did not oblige him to attend the family, in wandering with his tutor over the extenſive domain belonging to his Lordſhip's magnificent ſeat. He ſeemed indeed much more ſenſible of the charms of Caſtlenorth, which was the name of his uncle's houſe, from whence the title was derived, than pleaſed with either its preſent or its future poſſeſſor. Mr. Everard, who anxiouſly watched every emotion of his mind, ſaw this, and he ſaw that his pupil was of a temper which would ill bear to be dictated to in a point ſo nearly connected with his own happineſs. He prevailed therefore, with ſome difficulty, on Mrs. Willoughby, not to explain her views till nearer the period, when ſhe meant they ſhould be perfected; and they left Caſtlenorth without Willoughby's having the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion of them, or carrying away any other idea of his couſin, than that ſhe was a tall, fat, formal brown girl, whom he ſoon forgot and never deſired to remember. His uncle's complaints and quack medicines——his long lectures on genealogy and heraldry——had tired him; and Lady Caſtlenorth's dictatorial manners offended and diſguſted him. He told Mr. Everard, that the only hour in which he had felt any pleaſure during his

abode at their houſe, was that in which his mother fixed the time of departing for her own. Thither he returned with redoubled delight, after the reſtraint he had felt himſelf under at Caſtlenorth; for there lay all his plans of future felicity, and there were Matilda and Celeſtina, his two ſiſters, as he always called them, who ſeemed equally dear to him.

In a few months he went to Cambridge; and Mr. Everard, who afterwards ſaw him only for a few days in the year, had no longer the ſame opportunities of judging of his ſentiments. He ſtill however had intereſt enough with Mrs. Willoughby, to prevail on her to delay any intimation of the intended alliance. Lord Caſtlenorth, his lady, and daughter, were now in Italy, and were to remain there till within ſix months of the time fixed among themſelves for the marriage of the latter: but above a twelvemonth before the arrival of the former period, Mr. Everard died. Mrs. Willoughby and her family loſt in him the ſincereſt friend and moſt capable monitor: a loſs which greatly affected Willoughby, as well as his mother, who ſent for her ſon from Cambridge on that melancholy occaſion. Thither he had hardly returned, before the uncle of his father, on whom he had great dependence, and who had not long before taken him into his favour, and promiſed to make him his heir, died without having altered his will, and endowed an hoſpital with the eſtate which he had really meant to give his nephew, had not death overtaken him before he could conquer

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his habitual indolence, aggravated by the feebleneſs and imbecility of eighty-ſeven.

This diſappointment was ſeverely felt by Mrs. Willoughby, who apprehended that not only the immediate but the contingent intereſt of her ſon might be deeply affected by it: ſhe doubted whether it would not change the intentions of her brother in his favour; but after ſome weeks of uneaſy ſuſpenſe, ſhe received aſſurances from Italy that thoſe his intentions and wiſhes were ſtill the ſame.

Mrs. Willoughby, though re-aſſured in this reſpect, was ſtill in very low ſpirits, and felt every hour, with enereaſing ſeverity, the loſs ſhe had ſuſtained in ſuch a friend as Mr. Everard, whom ſhe lamented indeed publicly, but ſtill more bitterly in private. Her conſtitution, naturally very delicate, began to decline under the ſorrow which oppreſſed her. Matilda, then about ſixteen, was the only perſon about her who ſeemed inſenſible of the alteration which now made a ſlow but very evident progreſs in her looks and manner. Her countenance was ſtill pleaſing and intereſting, but very languid; her eyes had loſt their fire; and ſhe grew very thin. Her amiable manners remained; but all her vivacity in converſation was fled. She no longer enjoyed ſociety, of which ſhe had been ſo fond: but ſhe ſtill went into company, becauſe Matilda, now of an age to enter into all the gaieties of high life, did indeed engage in them with an avidity which her mother was too indulgent to repreſs, though ſhe could not approve it. Sometimes however ſhe ſuffered ſo much from crouded rooms and late hours, that though

ſhe did not even then complain, her phyſicians inſiſted on her forbearing ſo continually to hazard her health. Matilda, who was very uneaſy if long kept from company, was then put under the care of ſome of her mother's friends, and the taſk of attending on her beloved benefactreſs fell entirely to the lot of Celeſtina, who was never ſo happy as when employed in it, and who now having juſt completed her fourteenth year, ſurpaſſed, in the perfections both of perſon and mind, all that Mrs. Willoughby, partial as ſhe had always been to her, had ever ſuppoſed ſhe would attain.

Above two years paſſed away: Willoughby purſuing very regularly his ſtudies at Cambridge; Matilda purſuing as regularly every amuſement that offered itſelf; and Celeſtina, careleſs of all that has uſually attractions for youth, devoting her whole time and thoughts to Mrs. Willoughby, who without ſaying any thing of what ſhe felt to be inevitable, was gradually ſinking into the grave

This conviction made her determine to diſcloſe to her ſon, when ſhe next ſaw him, her purpoſe in regard to Miſs Fitz-Hayman; but it was a reſolution ſhe could not bring herſelf to make, without infinite regret; for in giving her reaſons for wiſhing this alliance, it was neceſſary for her to open to him the real ſtate of his fortune; of which her tenderneſs, in this inſtance perhaps injudicious, had hitherto kept him in ignorance. The longer this affectionate mother thought of the pain ſhe ſhould thus inflict on her ſon, the leſs ſhe found herſelf able to undertake it: ſhe therefore determined that

Mr.

Mr. Dawſon, who had been employed many years by his father, as ſteward and manager of the eſtates, ſhould, under pretence of conſulting him on his affairs, now that he was of an age to direct in them, diſcloſe to him their real ſituation. For this purpoſe he went to Cambridge; and there this unpleaſant explanation was made to Willoughby; who learned, that his father, towards the latter end of his life, had mortgaged above a third of his property for nearly its value; that what remained, was not only encumbered by heavy debts, which were to be diſcharged out of it, but had a charge of twelve hundred a year, his mother's jointure, and was to pay his ſiſter ten thouſand pounds, with intereſt till ſhe married—— burdens which ſo diminiſhed the income, as to make it impoſſible to ſave any thing during his minority, and left him no proſpect of ever enjoying his paternalal eſtate unembarraſſed, but by an opulent marriage. Though Mr. Dawſon had, with as much caution and tenderneſs as poſſible, opened to Willoughby, the real condition of his affairs, the young man, of warm paſſions and keen feelings, could not hear ſuch a mortifying account but with the extremeſt pain and humiliation. Unable to remain tranquilly at Cambridge, he immediately ſet out for London, and aſked of his mother a farther explanation; as if unwilling to receive from any hand but her's a blow ſo cruel, which ſeemed to deſtroy for ever all his favourite hopes.

Mrs. Willoughby had ever been ſo far from ſuſpecting that her ſon loved money, that a tendency

dency to careleſſneſs in that reſpect had ſometimes alarmed her: ſhe was therefore extremely ſurprized at the eagerneſs of his enquiries, and the evident anxiety and concern he expreſſed at his diſappointment But having convinced him that all he had heard was but too true, and recovered from the agitation into which the neceſſity of giving him ſo much pain had thrown her, ſhe ſeized the opportunity, while his mind ſeemed to turn with uneaſy ſolicitude towards the means of redeeming his patrimony, to ſuggeſt to him the plan ſhe had ſo long conſidered as infallible —"My dear George," ſaid ſhe, "there is one way by which all this may be repaired; and your eſtate, devolving to you from a long line of anceſtors, of whom any man might be proud, may not only be repaired but encreaſed, by an alliance of which an ambitious man may be ſtill prouder. My brother, Lord Caſtlenorth, is the laſt male of a line diſtinguiſhed ſince the conqueſt; your couſin, his only daughter, will inherit his fortune; the titles die with him. It is equally natural therefore for him and for me, to wiſh that you, my ſon, in becoming the huſband of my niece, may poſſeſs the eſtates and honours of my family, which on ſuch a union would be eaſily obtained; and that in you may be revived, or rather perpetuated, the family of Fitz-Hayman. I did not intend to have named this to you till your farther acquaintance with your couſin, who returns to England in the courſe of the next ſummer, ſhould have made it on your part a meaſure of inclination; for from all the accounts I have had of her, ſhe is very amiable and highly accompliſhed: but my uncertain health, and

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the near approach of that period when you become maſter of yourſelf, have at length determined me to tell you my thoughts in a manner, on which the proſperity of your future life depends. I need not ſay, George, that ſeeing it in that light, there is nothing in this world ſo near my heart as its completion."

Willoughby, whoſe mind was contending with the various emotions this diſcourſe of his mother's had raiſed, remained ſilent and confuſed. He changed colour; he ſighed, as if to throw off the unexpected preſſure on his heart; and Mrs. Willoughby, who ſaw with concern that he entered not into the project with the alacrity ſhe had expected, began again to deſcribe to him not only the numerous advantages which muſt follow the marriage, but to repeat all ſhe had heard, and more that ſhe had imagined, of the perfections of Miſs Fitz-Hayman.

Willoughby however appeared rather to be muſing than attending to almoſt the only converſation from his mother that he had ever thought tedious. When ſhe ſeemed to have exhauſted the ſubject, he ſtill pauſed a moment; then taking his hand from his forehead, he aſked his mother—whether ſhe thought Miſs Fitz-Hayman as lovely as Celeſtina?

"As lovely as Celeſtina!" replied Mrs. Willoughby in great and apparently painful ſurprize ——"How came Celeſtina to occur to you?"

"Nay," anſwered her ſon, attempting to appear indifferent—I know not how, unleſs becauſe ſhe is the prettieſt young woman I have lately ſeen."

"Surely

"Surely you do not think of Celeſtina," re-aſſumed Mrs. Willoughby with encreaſed emotion —"ſurely you are not imprudent enough to entertain an idea of her otherwiſe than as a ſiſter. There are objections—inſuperable objections. For God's ſake, George, let me be aſſured that you will never again think of her."

"Dear Madam," returned Willoughby with ſome quickneſs, "that is really more than I can promiſe. How is it poſſible for me to aſſure you, with any hope of my being able to keep my word, that I will not think of a beautiful and intereſting object, which, whenever I am with you, is continually before my eyes."

"Well then," ſaid his mother with yet more chagrin, "ſince it is ſo, you will compel me to remove her where——"

"Surely," cried the young man, eagerly interrupting her, "that would be very cruel—very cruel, as it would affect Celeſtina, and very unneceſſary as it relates to me; for I ſhall now be very ſeldom at home; and I can, without any danger of breaking my word, aſſure you, that nothing will ever make your ſon forget the duty he owes you, or hazard giving you pain. I am very ſorry I named Celeſtina, ſince you ſeem ſo uneaſy at it. Think of it no more I beſeech you; and continue to love, as you uſed to do, my adopted ſiſter, or I ſhall never forgive myſelf for my inadvertence."

Willoughby then, without ſtaying to talk over farther the propoſed alliance with Miſs Fitz-Hayman, hurried away; and that he might avoid all farther converſation with his mother, he ſtaid out to ſupper that night, and immediately after breakfaſt

breakfaſt the following morning returned to Cambridge; telling her, as he took leave, that it would be time enough to talk over the buſineſs ſhe had opened to him, when the parties to whom it related were in England, but that ſhe might aſſure herſelf that *her* happineſs was always nearer his heart than his own.

This was the firſt time in his life that he parted from Matilda and Celeſtina without ſaluting them both. When breakfaſt was over, and he had taken leave of his mother, he kiſſed his ſiſter as uſual, and was approaching Celeſtina, who already held out her hand to him, when catching his mother's eye, who ſeemed to look at him reproachingly, he bluſhed, and only bowing and wiſhing Celeſtina her health till he ſaw her again, he haſtened to the door, and without venturing even to look at her, as ſhe followed him thither with his mother and ſiſter, he mounted his horſe and diſappeared.

Hurt cruelly at this behaviour (which from the very different judgment ſhe had formed of it, had yet more alarmed his mother,) Celeſtina could not repreſs the tears which ſhe felt riſing to her eyes. Mrs. Willoughby ſtood at the door till her ſon turned into another ſtreet; and was then going to her own room, when Celeſtina, from an emotion ſhe could not command, caught her hand and burſt into tears: and for the firſt time in her life, her benefactreſs, inſtead of ſoothing her, received her careſſes with repulſive coldneſs, and almoſt without ſpeaking to her left her. Matilda was as uſual engaged to a morning concert, and had neither time nor inclination to attend to the concern of Celeſtina or the diſ-

pleaſure

pleaſure of her mother, which indeed ſhe either did not ſee, or ſeeing, reflect upon. Poor Celeſtina therefore, who never ſuſpected the real ſource of Willoughby's affected coldneſs, nor could imagine why his mother, who always found pleaſure and comfort in her company, ſhould now fly from her, concluded ſhe had offended them both, and paſſed the morning in tears. At dinner, however, Mrs. Willoughby, as if conſcious of her injuſtice, behaved to her with even more than her accuſtomed tenderneſs. After they had dined, as Matilda was ſtill out, their reading went on as uſual. Mrs. Willoughby took no notice of the ſwolen eyes and half-ſtifled ſobs which ſtill agitated the gentle boſom of her young friend; but without naming the cauſe, ſhe ſeemed ſolicitous to remove every remaining uneaſineſs; and by her eaſy and affectionate manner, Celeſtina became convinced that concern for her ſon's departure, and not anger towards her, had occaſioned the coldneſs which had ſo much alarmed her; and her ſoft heart was thus reſtored to tranquillity.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER II.

THOUGH Mrs. Willoughby took infinite pains to appear cheerful, and to hide the progreſs of the illneſs which was undermining her conſtitution, her efforts to appear better than ſhe was, could not deceive her phyſicians; who now propoſed that ſhe ſhould go either to Liſbon or the South of France. This preſcription however ſhe endeavoured to evade, by aſſuring them that travelling ſo late in the year would infallibly injure rather than be uſeful to her; but ſhe promiſed to follow their advice early in the enſuing ſpring, and to paſs the winter at Bath. Thither ſhe repaired in November, with her daughter and Celeſtina, to remain ſome months. Willoughby declined joining them at the end of term, contrary to his uſual cuſtom: he informed his mother, by letter, that he had made a party with ſome of his friends to paſs the Chriſtmas vacation at Alveſtone, and that on their way back to Cambridge they would ſtay two or three days at Bath.

Matilda

Matilda in the mean time, who frequented every public amuſement, was become a Bath beauty, followed and admired by that deſcription of men, whoſe opinion is conſidered as deciſive in the world of faſhion. Miſs Willoughby was always moſt elegantly dreſſed; for to be ſo was the principal ſtudy of her life. She was always with people of rank, was of an honourable family, had a good fortune, great connections, a pretty perſon, and was, to uſe the common phraſe, "extremely accompliſhed;" that is, ſhe knew ſomething of every thing, and talked as if ſhe knew a great deal more. Among the men of ton who contributed to feed her vanity and raiſe her faſhion, was Mr. Molyneux, the only ſon of an Iriſh Baronet, of whom the bounty of a grandfather had made him independent. With an handſome figure, a good fortune, and a title in reverſion, Mr. Molyneux was every where courted and admired; and by lounging about from one public place to another during the ſummer, and paſſing his winters, whether in England or Ireland, in the very firſt world, he had acquired ſo high a poliſh, that his manners and his dreſs, his expreſſions, and even his air, were copied by all the riſing beaux. His underſtanding was juſt of that level, which rendered him capable of being pleaſed with the ſpecies of fame; and having no great warmth of heart, he had no other motive of choice in marrying than that which aroſe from his ſolicitude to maintain his importance as a man of taſte in the faſhionable world. He had indeed no great inclination to marry at all; but his father,

ther, now far advanced in life, preſſed him ſo earneſtly to take a wife, and he was ſo beſieged by the kind entreaties of two maiden aunts who had a great deal to give him, that tired by their importunity, and willing enough to oblige them in a matter which was indifferent to himſelf, he at length, in the thirty-fifth year of his age, fixed on Miſs Miſs Wlloughby, as a pretty woman, well born, and above all——very much "the rage." Propoſals from ſuch a man were of courſe accepted by the mother and the daughter; Willoughby was pleaſed to hear his ſiſter was likely to be ſo well eſtabliſhed; and in a few weeks it was ſettled that the wedding was to take place in February, when Mrs. Willoughby and her family propoſed returning to London.

When Willoughby came with his Cambridge friends to Bath, to fulfil the promiſe given to his mother, he was introduced to his future brother-in-law. But a very ſhort obſervation convinced him that they were not deſigned for friends; and that however cloſely they might be allied, Mr. Molyneux would ſtill be to him a mere acquaintance. Willoughby was eager in the purſuit of knowledge; his mind, already highly cultivated, his heart warm and open, and his manners, with all the ingenuous ſimplicity of youth, had the natural good breeding which only good underſtanding can give. Whatever was the real character of Molyneux, it was no longer diſtinguiſhable under the poliſh of faſhion; to obtain which, alone, ſeemed to be his ſtudy; all his ideas of good and evil, of right or wrong, centered there. If books had

had been the object, in the circle where he moved, he would have qualified himself to talk upon them; but as they were not, his reading never extended beyond a short novel, a pamphlet, or a newspaper. To strike out something new in a cape or a carriage, something which the great would imitate and the little wonder at, was half the purpose of his life: to have any affections was reckoned extremely vulgar; and as he really had as few as was well possible, it cost him but little trouble to divest himself of them entirely, and to obtain that *sang froid* which is the true criterion of a man of fashion. It is absolutely necessary to be in the House of Commons. A seat therefore he had for a Cornish borough; where he gave a silent vote to the Minister for the time being, and neither cared nor enquired whether it would benefit or injure his country, about which he was perfectly indifferent. Yet with a mind occupied almost entirely by trifles, his handsome figure, and his affluent fortune and fashionable manners, gave him that consequence which is often denied to virtues and talents. His air was that of a man of rank; and the calm coldness of his manner gave an idea of latent powers, which he was supposed to be too indolent to exert.

Matilda, in many respects, seemed to be his very counterpart. Since they had been so much together, she had adopted his thoughts and caught his phrases; and her brother, though he did not think her by any means improved by the imitation, allowed, that if similarity of character gives happiness in marriage, his sister had a prospect of being completely happy. But when he looked at Celestina, which he avoided doing as much as possible,

poſſible, he ſaw in her improvements ſo different from thoſe of Matilda, that all his reſolutions to wean his mind from dwelling on her perfections faded before her. She was now in her ſeventeenth year, with a face and form which inſtantly attracted the eye, even before the beauties of her underſtanding had time to diſplay themſelves. Theſe latter ſhe never obtruded on obſervation; but was as ſilent in company as Matilda was talkative and gay. The lovelineſs of her form therefore it was that immediately ſtruck the young companions of Willoughby; who both, the inſtant they quitted the room where they had been introduced to Mrs. Willoughby, her daughter, and Celeſtina, aſked of Willoughby farther particulars of his adopted ſiſter, declaring they had never ſeen ſo charming a girl, and expreſſing their wonder at the calmneſs with which he had frequently ſpoken of her. This converſation was ſo uneaſy to him, that he could with difficulty conceal his vexation; and as his college friends from time to time renewed it, that circumſtance, added to the pain he felt in forcing himſelf to behave to Celeſtina with cold and diſtant civility, ſhortened his viſit to three days; at the end of which time he took leave of his mother, who again mentioned to him her views in regard to Miſs Fitz-Hayman; to which Willoughby, who was leſs than ever inclined to liſten to her on that point, returned vague but gentle anſwers; eſcaping from it as well as he could without giving any thing like a promiſe, he haſtened back to his books, among which he hoped to loſe the idea of Celeſtina, which he could not cheriſh but at the

hazard

hazard of rendering either his mother or himſelf unhappy.

He promiſed to attend in London his ſiſter's wedding, which was now to take place in a month, and for which preparations were making: but about a week before the day fixed for Mrs. Willoughby's departure for London, an inflammation on her already injured lungs ſeized her ſo ſuddenly, that there was only time to ſend an expreſs to Cambridge for her ſon, who, notwithſtanding his utmoſt expedition, arrived hardly an hour before his excellent parent expired.

As ſhe had before taken leave of her daughter and Celeſtina, the greater part of that melancholy hour was given to her ſon, ever the object of her tendereſt affections. What paſſed was known only to Willoughby, who, the moment his mother was no more, gave way to ſuch an exceſs of ſorrow, as deprived him for ſome hours of his ſenſes; and when they were reſtored, the ſight of Matilda's calmneſs, who did not ſeem to him to feel half the concern ſhe ought to do, and the perfect compoſure of Molyneux, who evidently felt nothing, ſeemed to him ſo inſupportable, that he ſhut himſelf up in his own lodgings and refuſed every offer of conſolation. Though Celeſtina had long apprehended that the life of her beloved benefactreſs was in a much more precarious ſituation than ſhe could herſelf allow, or than Matilda was willing to ſee, yet this cruel and yet unexpected blow quite overwhelmed her: but Willoughby, as unable to bear the ſight of her grief as diſpleaſed at the ſtoical compoſure of his ſiſter, fled with equal ſolicitude from both of them;

them; and having given directions for removing the remains of his mother to the family ſeat at Alveſtone, he haſtened thither himſelf to receive and pay them the laſt offices; which being done, he wrote to his ſiſter, recommending it to her to return to London with Celeſtina, and to ſend for an elderly maiden relation, to remain with them till her marriage, which the death of her mother had of neceſſity poſtponed: he promiſed to ſee her in town in the courſe of a fortnight, there to execute, as far as he could, thoſe parts of his mother's will which demanded immediate attention.

In purſuance of theſe directions the two young ladies ſet out for London, Mr. Molyneux following them in his own carriage. The ſight of the houſe which had now loſt its miſtreſs, threw Celeſtina into all thoſe agonies which the recollection of paſt happineſs and paſt kindneſs, from a lamented friend, gives to a heart ſo tender and ſo ſenſible as her's; while Matilda, who ſhed a tear or two from feeling ſomething of the ſame ſenſation, preſently recovered herſelf, and received her lover, who waited upon her immediately after his arrival, without betraying any ſymptoms of emotion which could give him cauſe to apprehend that the repoſe of his future life might ſuffer any interruption from the too exquiſite ſenſibility of his wife.

At the time he had appointed, Willoughby rejoined them. Though he now ſaw them with leſs emotion, his melancholy ſeemed to be deeper than at firſt. With his ſiſter he avoided all converſation that was not abſolutely neceſſary; with Celeſtina he was even more reſerved, and

never, as in their happier days, brought his books and ſat with her, or ſought her converſation as his greateſt pleaſure. He contrived indeed, under pretence of having affairs to ſettle abroad, to ſee her only at dinner or ſupper; and frequently, under pretence of illneſs, abſented himſelf from both.

After having been with them a few days, during which this reſerved and altered behaviour almoſt broke the heart of Celeſtina, who ſeemed to have loſt, by the death of the mother, the friendſhip of the ſon, he ſent up one of the female ſervants to her room, when ſhe retired thither after breakfaſt, to beg to ſpeak to her in his ſiſter's dreſſing room. This formal meſſage, ſo unlike the brotherly familiarity with which he uſed to treat her, cut her to the heart, but ſhe immediately attended the ſummons.

Willoughby bowed on her entrance. They both ſat down: Celeſtina trying to check the tears ſhe found riſing to her eyes, and the ſighs which ſwelled her boſom. His looks, ſo pale, ſo changed from what they were, his attitude, his ſilence, all contributed to diſtreſs her; while he ſeemed collecting fortitude to go through the taſk he was to execute. After a ſhort pauſe, he took from his pocket book a paper, opened it, and counted out three Bank notes, of ſix hundred pounds each, on the table; then advancing towards her with them in his hand, he preſented them to her, ſaying in a voice which he did not intend ſhould faulter—"There, Madam, is the ſum which Mrs. Willoughby—which my mother, by her will, bequeaths you, and which, as her executor, I moſt willingly pay you. Allow me

to

to wiſh you every happineſs—and——" He would have gone on: but Celeſtina, who had ariſen on his approaching her, turned pale and ſat down. "You are not well," ſaid he: "the recollection of my mother——"

"Does indeed overcome me," anſwered Celeſtina. "*I* have loſt a mother—and a brother too——Yes! I have loſt all!"

"Pardon me, Miſs de Mornay," replied Willoughby, "I meant not to diſtreſs you——and——"

"Miſs de Mornay!" repeated Celeſtina, again interrupting him—"*Miſs* de Mornay and *Madam*. Ah! Mr. Willoughby! thoſe appellations of diſtant civility convince me that I have no longer a friend—a brother——"

"Nay, but my dear Madam, be not, I beſeech you, guilty of ſo much injuſtice. Let me execute the directions given me by my dear deceaſed mother, whoſe orders you know were, that within two months after her deceaſe theſe ſhould be put in your poſſeſſion." He then again offered the notes to her.

Celeſtina put forth her trembling hand; but inſtantly withdrew it.—"I cannot take the notes indeed, Mr. Willoughby," ſaid ſhe. "What can I do with them? I, who am a minor, a ſtranger, an orphan; who have no relation, no guardian—no friend! I did indeed hope," continued ſhe, her eyes filling with tears from the recollection of her forlorn ſituation—"I did indeed hope that you, Sir, would have had the goodneſs to have kept it for me till——"

She ſtopped from inability to proceed. "Till when, my dear Miſs De Mornay?" cried Wil-

loughby with eagerneſs he ſeemed endeavouring to check. "Certainly I would if it had been in my power; but it was my ſolemn promiſe to my mother to pay it into your hands, or into thoſe of any perſon whom you ſhould appoint."

"And cannot I name *you* as being that perſon?"

"Pardon me, dear Celeſtina," anſwered Willoughby, ſpeaking haſtily, as if fearful of relapſing into the fondneſs he once felt, and deſirous of quitting a painful ſubject—"pardon me, it is not poſſible for me to be of that ſervice to you which moſt aſſuredly I ſhould rejoice to be if—"

"Dear Celeſtina!" replied ſhe. "Ah! Willoughby! I have ſeen for many, many months, that I am no longer your once dear ſiſter Celeſtina. Call me Madam and Miſs de Mornay, as you did juſt now, rather than flatter me with the ſound, when the ſincerity of your regard is gone! Well Sir! ſince, for reaſons which perhaps I ought not to penetrate, it is no longer in *your* power to act by me as a brother and a friend, I will no farther intrude on your kindneſs than to beg you will tell me how I ought to place the proviſion thus made for me by my benefactreſs."

Willoughby half ſtifled a deep ſigh; and after a moment's pauſe ſaid—"I would adviſe you to place it immediately on government ſecurity, in the names of two perſons on whom you can rely, till you become of age. Dawſon, who was, you know, always employed by my mother, is more converſant than I am in theſe matters. If you will give me leave I will ſend him to you; and I

am

am convinced you may ſafely truſt to his honor and probity."

He then again offered the notes he had in his hand. Celeſtina took them in ſilence, being in truth unable to ſpeak; and turning haſtily away, he reached the door, where he ſtopped as if irreſolute; then in a low and faultering voice he ſaid—"As I ſhall probably ſee you no more, unleſs in mixed company, before I return to Cambridge, I cannot take this my laſt leave, without aſſuring you, that however circumſtances may, alas! *muſt* prevent my ſhewing it, my heart can never be indifferent to the welfare—to the happineſs of my ſiſter Celeſtina."

There was no time for the trembling auditor to anſwer this addreſs, to reflect on the peculiar way in which the whole was delivered, nor on the ſtrong emphaſis laid on the words *may* and *muſt*; for he was in a moment at the bottom of the ſtairs, and Celeſtina, who remained in breathleſs agitation, with the door of the apartment ſtill open, heard him a moment afterwards call to his ſervant for his hat, and the door of the houſe preſently ſhut after him. She then ſat down and burſt into tears, for which ſhe was, on a little reflection, aſhamed to aſſign a reaſon even to herſelf. "For what do I weep," ſaid ſhe—"or why am I diſappointed? What did I expect? that Willoughby was attached to me? Surely no! for he never gave me any reaſon to imagine it, and of late has ſedulouſly avoided me, as if he ſuppoſed me weak and vain enough to miſinterpret the friendſhip and regard he uſed to ſhew me. Let me, while he does ſtay, convince him that he may, without prejudice to his views in regard

to Miſs Fitz-Hayman, ſtill treat me and conſider me as his ſiſter, and that I never thought of being looked upon otherwiſe, which ſurely he muſt have fancied, or he would not behave to me as he does!" Another flood of tears relieved the ſwelling heart of Celeſtina after this ſoliloquy. She then dried her eyes, dreſſed, and acquired ſo much command over herſelf as to meet Willoughby at dinner without betraying any ſymptoms of the uneaſineſs and mortification ſhe ſtill ſuffered; and when the next day he took leave of her and Matilda, ſhe bade him adieu with the ſame apparent calmneſs.

Three months paſſed, and the time fixed for Matilda's marriage arrived. Willoughby then wrote to deſire his ſiſter would excuſe his devoting only a ſingle day to her on that occaſion: he would attend he ſaid to give her away, but was obliged by indiſpenſible buſineſs to return immediately afterwards to Cambridge. Matilda remarked how ſtrange it was that her brother, who had now been ſome time of age, was ſo bigotted to his books that he could not leave them for longer than a day even on ſuch an occaſion; but his pleaſures and her's differed ſo greatly, and their tempers and purſuits were ſo oppoſite, that no ſympathy had for ſome years exiſted between them; though on the part of Willoughby there was always great affection for her; and on her's, as much regard for her brother as it was her nature to feel for any body. This difference of ſentiment and inclination however had inſenſibly ſo far eſtranged them from each other, that the company of Willoughby was oftner a reſtraint than a pleaſure to his ſiſter, and therefore as ſhe

felt

felt little regret in loſing it, ſhe thought not much about his motives for depriving her of it.

The evening before that on which Matilda was by ſpecial licence to be married to Mr. Molyneux, her brother arrived: but inſtead of the gaiety the occaſion required, or even that which had formerly been uſual with him, his melancholy and regret ſeemed to have become habitual by indulgence. He hardly ſpoke: and when he did, it was with ſuch languor that Matilda might with reaſon have been alarmed for his health, if ſhe had been capable of attending ſeriouſly to any thing but herſelf. Celeſtina to whom he behaved with more diſtant reſerve than ever, could not be inſenſible or ſilent about a health and life which ought ſhe thought to be ſo precious to his ſiſter and his friends, and therefore ſhe ſpoke to Matilda, when they retired after ſupper, of the change ſo evident in her brother. Matilda anſwered coldly that it was owing to nothing but his burying himſelf as he did among his books, and loſing all reliſh for other company. "I wiſh," added ſhe, "that theſe Fitz-Haymans were come over, that he might live in the world again, and be like other people, which he muſt be when he is married." Celeſtina could not heartily join in this wiſh, and even doubted whether Willoughby ever would be quite like thoſe who were called "other people" by his ſiſter. She dropped the converſation however, and retired to her pillow with more ſolicitude for the happineſs of Matilda, which was to be determined the next day, than Matilda was capable of feeling for herſelf. The image of Willoughby, ſuch as he was a few years before, was ſtrongly

painted by her imagination: ſhe ran over all their former early pleaſures; their walks, their reading, their gardening together at Alveſtone while yet children; then Willoughby, ſuch as he now was, ſo amiable yet ſo changed, obtruded himſelf on her mind; and being unable to look forward with any degree of pleaſure, ſhe felt with redoubled ſorrow that thoſe days of innocent confidence and ingenuous tenderneſs, could never—never return!

CHAPTER

CHAPTER III.

WHEN the party met the next day, every body had left off their mourning, and every face appeared cheerful but thoſe of Willoughby and Celeſtina: the latter, when gaily rallied by the friends of Mr. Molyneux, endeavoured to recover her tranquillity; and as to Matilda herſelf, ſhe gave away her hand with as much eaſe as if it was a matter of courſe. Molyneux received it with equal compoſure; and as ſoon as they were married they ſat out, accompanied only by Celeſtina and Mr. Hamilton, a near relation of the bridegrooms, for an houſe which Mr. Molyneux rented in Hampſhire. Willoughby ſaluted his ſiſter; and as he handed her into the coach, he again wiſhed her happineſs. It was impoſſible to avoid doing the ſame as Celeſtina paſſed him, but he faultered, and could hardly articulate his compliment, which while he was yet tremulouſly attempting to expreſs, holding one of her hands between his, Mr. Hamilton, who had been detained by giving ſome orders to his ſervant,

vant, came up, and taking her other hand ſaid—"Come, come! as you don't go with us, Willoughby, the care of this lady devolves upon me, and I ſhall not allow theſe ſorrowful partings to make her as melancholy as you are yourſelf all her journey. Celeſtina was then unreſiſtingly led away; while Willoughby, who followed her to the coach door, found at that moment his heart aſſailed by pangs it had never felt before, but which he knew too well to be jealouſy in its moſt corroſive form. As the coach drove away, he ſtood looking after it; now repenting that he had not accompanied his ſiſter and her huſband into Hampſhire, then determining to order his horſe and follow them; now deteſting Hamilton, of whom he had never thought before, and then reſolving to conquer a paſſion, which a thouſand circumſtances made it the height of folly to indulge. The coach which contained the object of it was already out of ſight; but Willoughby ſtill ſtood on the ſpot from whence it had been driven, ſo loſt in the indulgence of theſe ſenſations, that he forgot where he was, and was rouſed from his reverie only by the arrival of a friend, with whom he had made an appointment to go in his chaiſe part of the way to Cambridge.

This friend he was aſhamed to diſappoint, nor could he form any excuſe to account for his ſuddenly changing his mind and following his ſiſter, whom he had ſteadily declined to accompany under pretence of urgent engagements.—While he yet debated, the chaiſe was ready, and with an heart torn with contending paſſions, and a mind intent only on Celeſtina and the advantage

Hamilton

Hamilton enjoyed of being ſo long with her, as during the ſtay of Molyneux in Hampſhire, and in the tour they were afterwards to make, he proceeded, abſent, ſilent, and miſerable, to the end of his journey.

Celeſtina with equal oppreſſion of ſpirits was yet more unfortunate, becauſe ſhe was afraid of enquiring too narrowly into the ſource of her concern, nor did ſhe dare to indulge it, but was compelled to aſſume cheerfulneſs very foreign to her feelings. Mr. Hamilton, who had never taken much notice of her before, now ſeemed diſpoſed to amuſe himſelf by coquetting with her; but ſhe had ſo little inclination to encourage him, that, as he was too perfectly a man of the world to give himſelf much trouble about any woman, he ſoon left her to her own amuſements. In a few days after the bride and bridegroom arrived at their houſe, it was filled with company; and Matilda, wholly occupied with parties all the morning, and play in the evening, had never time to think of Celeſtina, who ſoon found herſelf neglected by the only perſon whom ſhe could now call her friend; and the diſappointment which ſtill ſat ſo heavy on her heart—the failure, as ſhe believed, of Willoughby's regard——was now embittered by the coldneſs or rather careleſſneſs which ſhe experienced from his ſiſter.

In a few weeks a party was made to viſit Plymouth and the Weſtern bathing places. Celeſtina went with them as a matter of courſe, but ſhe felt herſelf dwindling faſt into the humiliating character of a dependent companion, and ſometimes fancied that her place in the coach might

might have been occupied by another more to the ſatisfaction of her friend : yet Mrs. Molyneux was never rude to her ; and ſometimes related (with apparent kindneſs) how her mother had adopted her from a convent, and that therefore ſhe ever ſhould conſider her as her ſiſter. Celeſtina always felt herſelf more mortified than gratified by theſe relations ; and by degrees they became ſo irkſome to her, and the whole ſtyle of converſation among Matilda's friends ſo little to her taſte, that ſhe inſenſibly acquired an habit of abſenting herſelf, and of living very much alone either in her own room, or in the walks which wherever the party fixed ſhe contrived to find, and whither the image of Willoughby, ſuch as it had been at a very early period of her life impreſſed on her young heart, inceſſantly accompanied her. This was more particularly the caſe, when in the courſe of their tour, Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux undertook to ſhew their friends Alveſtone, where Willoughby had ordered every thing to be prepared for their reception as if he had been himſelf there. Matilda re-viſited this beautiful place with no other emotions than thoſe of gratified pride ; but on Celeſtina it had a very different effect : this was the ſcene where the happieſt hours of her life had paſſed. The dreſſing-room where they all uſed to aſſemble when the only parent ſhe had known was it's miſtreſs, brought her forcibly to the recollection of Celeſtina. The chair on which ſhe uſed to ſit, the furniture which ſhe had worked herſelf, and the pictures ſhe had collected, were ſo many memorials on which Celeſtina could not look without recollecting a thouſand inſtances of her general goodneſs

goodneſs or her particular tenderneſs, and feeling with bitter regret the irreparable loſs ſhe had ſuſtained. The park and the gardens too furniſhed her with many fources of painful contemplation, mingled however with a degree of melancholy ſo ſoothing, that nothing would have been to her ſo great a puniſhment, as being obliged to exchange it for the deſultory and unintereſting converſation, which, in the little time ſpared from the card-table, engaged the party within the houſe.

The party however troubled themſelves very little with her; and ſhe was left at liberty to retrace the walks which ſhe had ſo often traverſed with Willoughby, while Matilda leaned on one arm and ſhe on the other, and to gaze on the proſpects which he, while yet a boy, had pointed out to them with ſo much pleaſure. She remembered all the propoſed improvements of which he delighted to talk. A rapid ſtream burſting from the hollow of a rocky common that bounded the park, and made its way through it, had been by the former Mr. Willoughby widened at a great expence, and now fell ſeveral feet into a vale which he had at a ſtill greater coſt, floated with water. On the ſides of this fall, which had been formerly part of the common, grew ſome old oaks and beech, and among theſe the mountain aſh and weeping birch had been planted and now ſpread their various foliage, and half concealed the water that daſhed from rock to rock between them. Theſe ſteep banks had ever been the favourite ſeats of Willoughby; who there ſitting between his two ſiſters, and holding each of their hands, had very frequently amuſed himſelf with

projects

projects to encreaſe the roar of the water, or deepen the ſhade of the wood that fringed its ſide. This place was the daily reſort of Celeſtina during the week ſhe remained at Alveſtone, and thither ſhe uſually carried ſome of thoſe books from the library that ſhe remembered Willoughby had read to her. Theſe were principally poetry: and the re-peruſal of them, the place, the ſeaſon, a thouſand tender remembrances enforced by each, ſerved at once to ſoften and depreſs an heart naturally tender and affectionate, which, deprived of almoſt every other object of its regard, cheriſhed with painful pleaſure the idea of Willoughby, ſuch as he once was, and when they paſſed here ſo many innocent enchanting hours. But when ſhe imagined that in a few months he would probably re-viſit theſe ſcenes with another, with Miſs Fitz-Hayman, who would then be his wife, and that ſhe herſelf ſhould never again be admitted to wander among them with their beloved maſter, ſick deſpondence took poſſeſſion of her ſoul, and it was with difficulty after theſe reflections, that ſhe could re-aſſume courage enough to mix with the friends whom Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux had aſſembled to liſten to inſipid pleaſantry and attend to unintereſting converſation.

But whatever regret Celeſtina felt in recollecting paſt hours of felicity which ſhe knew could never return, ſhe left Alveſtone with extreme reluctance, and had it been proper, or poſſible, would moſt willingly have remained there alone. In quitting it never to return, ſhe felt almoſt as much concern as ſhe had done when in taking

leave

leave of Willoughby, ſhe fancied that ſhe ſhould ſee him no more till he was married to Miſs Fitz-Hayman.

Of that match Mrs. Molyneux now very frequently ſpoke as a matter entirely ſettled, and Celeſtina no longer doubted of its ſpeedy completion. This circumſtance, (which gave her uneaſineſs that ſhe was unable either to repreſs or entirely to diſguiſe,) the encreaſing indifference of Matilda towards her, and the conſtant ſucceſſion of company in which Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux lived, united to raiſe in her a wiſh to quit them; and finding that the hints ſhe gave of ſuch a diſpoſition were received with perfect careleſsneſs, and that ſuch a removal would probably not be objected to, ſhe every day grew fonder of her project, and during their ſtay at Sidmouth fixed on a cottage about four miles from it, where ſhe thought ſhe might reſide, if not happily at leaſt in that quiet obſcurity which her circumſtances rendered prudent, and her diſtaſte to the world in which ſhe now lived, pleaſant. She found that ſhe could there be accommodated with board and lodging, and there ſhe would now have remained if Mrs. Molyneux had not, when ſhe underſtood her project, inſiſted on her returning to London with her after finiſhing their tour.—"Go with me however," ſaid ſhe, "the reſt of our journey, and till we meet the Caſtlenorths, who are to be in town in October; and then if you have this rural paſſion ſtill ſo ſtrong upon you, you ſhall take your own way." Tho' there was little appearance of affection in this invitation, Celeſtina thought ſhe ought not to decline

cline it, and therefore, though meeting the Caſtlenorths was what ſhe moſt ſolicitouſly wiſhed to avoid, ſhe determined to go with her friend to town, that ſhe might not give her any pretence for forgetting her entirely, or incur the cenſure of the world, for leaving abruptly the only protection ſhe could claim.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IV.

THE return of Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux to London was poſtponed from time to time till November. Lord Caſtlenorth had been too ill to ſet out on his journey to England at the time he propoſed, and the family meeting which was to ſettle all that related to the marriage was now delayed till after Chriſtmas. Willoughby however teſtified no impatience: he had promiſed to meet his ſiſter and her huſband in town on their arrival; but inſtead of doing ſo, he ſent ſuch an inſufficient excuſe as muſt have appeared very ſtrange to Matilda had ſhe thought much about it; but immerſed in pleaſures and purſuits of her own, ſhe gave herſelf very little time to reflect no her brother's conduct, and was far from ſuppoſing that he abſented himſelf becauſe he could not ſee Celeſtina without encreaſing and confirming a paſſion which he had many reaſons againſt indulging, and of which he was determined to cure

cure himſelf by abſence and reflection. The negociation with his uncle, which had been carried ſo far by his mother, he neither declined nor forwarded; but ſuffered it to remain nearly on the footing ſhe had left it, flattering himſelf that by the time Miſs Fitz-Hayman arrived in London, he ſhould have ſo far conquered his early attachment as to have an heart as well as the hand, which he had promiſed to his mother's entreaties, to offer her.

Though his endeavours to forget Celeſtina had hitherto been quite unſucceſsful, he had however acquired ſo much reſolution as to determine not to ſee her, till the arrival of his deſtined wife, and the final ſettlement of every thing that related to his marriage, ſhould put it out of his power to break the engagement he had made to Mrs. Willoughby in her laſt hours, and to ſacrifice every thing to his paſſion. The ſtruggle he underwent however was dreadful, and by continually repeating to himſelf the neceſſity there was for his forgetting Celeſtina, he ſo accuſtomed himſelf to think of her, that he in reality ſoon ceaſed to think with intereſt of any body elſe; and though he indeavoured to perſuade himſelf that he ſhould have courage to acquit himſelf of what he tried to think his duty to his family, to his mother's memory, and himſelf, there was no intelligence he ſo much dreaded as that of the arrival of his uncle's family in England.

Celeſtina on her part, paſſed her time in a way very unpleaſant to her. Mrs. Molyneux, now miſtreſs of herſelf, plunged into unceaſing diſſipation; and as Celeſtina was frequently deſired to accompany her, and always to make one of the

parties

parties ſhe collected at her own houſe, ſhe found that the expences of dreſs alone would greatly exceed the income of her little fortune, and that ſhe ſhould ſoon exhauſt it to live among people whoſe ſociety gave her no pleaſure, and who for the moſt part conſidered her only as ſhe was capable of filling up a table or the corner of a coach when it was vacant. Her quickneſs of apprehenſion and extreme ſenſibility made her too frequently remark, that the table or the coach might in the apprehenſion of Matilda always be as well, and ſometimes better filled; and theſe obſervations, together with her growing diſlike to Mr. Molyneux, and the people with whom he aſſociated, who not unfrequently treated her with the impertinent familiarity which they thought themſelves at liberty to uſe towards Mrs. Molyneux's *companion*, renewed, before ſhe had been ſix weeks in town, her wiſh to quit them for ever, and to enjoy in her own way the ſmall independence given her by her lamented benefactreſs.

The certainty that Miſs Fitz-Hayman was ſo ſoon to become the wife of the only man for whom ſhe ever had felt the leaſt degree of partiality, haſtened the execution of her project. She now heard every day of the great beauty, the extraordinary accompliſhments, and the immenſe fortune of the future bride, while Mrs. Molyneux was exerciſing her fancy on the equipages, and other preparations which were ſo ſoon to be on foot for the wedding of her brother; a ſubject that Celeſtina always liſtened to with impatience, which, though ſhe with difficulty concealed it from others, ſhe was painfully conſcious of herſelf.

herſelf. The eternal harrangues of Mrs. Molyneux on taſte and elegance had always been fatiguing to her, but ſhe was more than uſually diſguſted when the purpoſe of theſe lectures was to decide upon or to deſcribe the bridal fineries intended for Willoughby and Miſs Fitz-Hayman.

A letter now arrived from Lady Caſtlenorth announcing her intentions of being in London with her Lord and her daughter the following week; and at this intelligence Celeſtina; no longer heſitating, wrote to the perſon near Sidmouth, to whom ſhe had ſpoken the preceding ſummer; and finding ſhe could be immediately received at the lodging ſhe had then looked at, ſhe packed up and ſent by the waggon the ſmall collection of books given her by Mrs. Willoughby, which with her clothes and the legacy veſted in the funds, were all her worldly poſſeſſions; and that evening after ſupper, when by a chance very unuſual with them Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux were without company, ſhe declared her intentions of going into the country the next day.

Mr. Molyneux, twirling about a wine glaſs and humming a tune, ſeemed to attend very little to the information; his wife, after hearing it with almoſt equal indifference, ſaid—"I cannot imagine, my dear, why you think of going into the country now, or what you propoſe by it."

"Nothing more," replied Celeſtina, piqued at the coldneſs of her manner, "than to accuſtom myſelf at once to a mode of life which my narrow fortune renders, if not abſolutely neceſſary, at leaſt highly prudent."

"Prudence,"

"Prudence," cried Molyneux with a ſmile, which Celeſtina thought a contemptuous one, "is an acquiſition very unuſual at eighteen: but a girl of ſpirit, with ſo pretty a perſon as your's is, ſhould be rather ambitious than prudent, and ſhould try to make her fortune by marriage inſtead of hiding herſelf in the country. Numberleſs young women about town have done extremely well, who, without any compliment, have not had your ſhare of beauty."

"Very poſſibly, Sir," replied Celeſtina; "but unleſs my mind was diſpoſed as their minds probably were, which I believe it never will be, the perſonal advantages you ſo flattering allow me, will never obtain the affluence you think ſo deſirable."

"What do you mean to ſay?" anſwered he. "What! do you pretend that you would not marry as other women do for money or title?"

"For neither, upon my honour."

"Pooh! I thought you had more ſenſe; but ſince it is ſo, my dear Celeſtina, I wiſh you all poſſible felicity in your new plan of paſtoral amuſement, and doubt not but that ſome tender and amiable Philander, in the ſhape of a young Weſt-country curate, will enable you to realize to your heart's content all your ideas of diſintereſted love and rural happineſs."

Molyneux then ſauntered away, and his lady looking in a pocket mirror, and picking her teeth with the niceſt care, took up the argument.

"You

"You know Celeſtina that I have the greateſt regard in the world for you, and that I have argued with you for ever about this nonſenſical reſolution, which I cannot imagine what put into your head. You will be tired to death child, in the country at this time of the year. However, if you will go, do ſtay here at leaſt till after my brother is married. We ſhall have half the world with us then, and I ſhall want you for twenty things."

At the mention of Willoughby's marriage, Celeſtina, though ſo much accuſtomed to hear of it, changed colour, and her voice as well as her look might have betrayed the uneaſy ſenſations ſhe felt, if Mrs. Molyneux had not been always too much occupied by herſelf to attend very narrowly to another.

"Pardon me, dear Madam," ſaid Celeſtina, "I certainly cannot be wanted on that occaſion. You will have ſo many other friends about you that I ſhall not be miſſed; and I have no right, indeed I never had any, to be upon an equality with the perſons who will then be aſſembled about you. Let me therefore find my own place in ſociety, and learn at once to ſubmit to it."

After ſome other converſation, Celeſtina, ſtill unwilling to appear in the ſlighteſt degree ungrateful for paſt kindneſs or too impatient of her preſent ſituation, agreed to ſtay another week in town; and retired to her own room relieved by having thus declared her intentions, and fixed the time when her preſent uneaſy ſtate of dependance would be at an end.

But

But of this delay ſhe repented, when the next day notice was received by Mrs. Molyneux of the arrival of Lord and Lady Caſtlenorth, at their houſe in Groſvenor-ſtreet. Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux inſtantly waited on them; the next evening they were to return the viſit in form; and thus Celeſtina was compelled to be preſent at a meeting ſhe had been ſtudiouſly endeavouring to avoid.

Lord Caſtlenorth was one of thoſe unfortunate beings, who have been brought up never to have a wiſh unprevented or a want ungratified. He was born when his father was far advanced in life, the ſole heir to one of the moſt ancient * families and opulent fortunes in England; and was of ſo much conſequence, that till he was near eighteen, he was hardly ever ſuffered out of the ſight of his father. He was then releaſed by death from the officious affection which had long been very troubleſome to him; and with every thing on his ſide but a good conſtitution, he ſat out on a wild career of pleaſure, in which, before he had materially hurt his fortune, he was ſtopped by the apprehenſion of declining health. His figure was one of thoſe which look as if

"The blaſts of January would blow them thro' and thro';"

and the irregularities of his life had ſo much impaired a habit, naturally weak, that at thirty he

* Fitz-Hayman, Earl of Gloceſter, came in with the Conqueror, the heireſs of which family married a natural ſon of Henry I. by Neſla, daughter of Rhees Prince of South Wales.

was

was a mere ſhadow, and then was told by his phyſicians that he muſt reſolve on a reſidence of ſome time in the South of Europe, if he would avoid going to that country "from whoſe bourn no traveller return:" to which having an invincible averſion, he loſt not a moment in complying with their advice. But as he ſoon recovered ſome degree of health, he grew every day leſs attentive to injunctions they had given as to his manner of life; and ralapſing into his former indiſcretions, he was again reduced to extremities, and when very little hope of his life remained, was recommended by one of his medical friends in London, to put himſelf under the care of Dr. Maclaurin, a Scottiſh phyſician, who had been ſettled for two or three years at Naples with his wife and family.

There he was treated with the moſt aſſiduous attention, not only by the Doctor himſelf, but by Mrs. Maclaurin and her daughter, then near thirty, who was ſo reaſonable as to allow herſelf to be five-and-twenty. She was tall, and had a tolerable face, with which her ambition to be admired, ſuffered her not to be content in its natural ſtate. She had been brought up to attend moſt ſedulouſly to her own intereſt, and to purſue the eſtabliſhment of her fortune by marriage: ſhe had therefore learned early to fawn and flatter; and to the cunning of her mother united ſome portion of the abilities of her father. Mrs. Maclaurin was one of that ſpecies of beings, who are by courteſy denominated good ſort of women. All her virtues were negative: and of the few vices ſhe had it in her power to practiſe, ſhe contented herſelf with malice and

defamation

defamation, and even in thoſe ſhe never indulged herſelf unleſs very certain that the objects were incapable of retort and totally defenceleſs. She had now however but little opportunity of gratification; for though ſhe had lived three years in Italy, ſhe underſtood not a word of the language, and her attempts to amend the world being therefore made, in one not underſtood by thoſe in whoſe favor they were exerted, were very little comprehended, and of courſe failed of affording her much ſatisfaction. Her talents being thus perforce confined to her own houſhold, had taken another turn, and had been applied to the acquiſition of money, and of ſecuring a good match for her daughter.

The Doctor, though really a man of ſome abilities, had not hitherto been ſucceſsful enough in his profeſſion to be enabled to give her a fortune: the project of marrying her well was equally intereſting to him; and among the various patients he had received into his houſe ſince he reſided at Naples, the elder ſon of a very opulent merchant in London, and an old Baronet, who had ſeveral daughters older than Miſs Maclaurin, very narrowly eſcaped her multiform attractions by the impertinent remonſtrances of their families.

Lord Caſtlenorth had no relations but Mrs. Willoughby, who was very unlikely to interfere in any matrimonial project; he had beſides a much larger fortune, and was of a much higher rank, than any of thoſe for whom the family of Maclaurin had intended the honor of their alliance; but the very circumſtance which rendered the proſpect of ſuch a marriage moſt allur-

ing, ſeemed to preclude the probability of ſucceſs.

Among the few things Lord Caſtlenorth had learned of his father, the principal was to value himſelf on his deſcent; and, as far as related to his own family, he was a genealogiſt almoſt as ſoon as he could ſpeak. As he advanced in life, he found himſelf of ſo little conſequence for individual merit, that he was compelled to avail himſelf of the names of his anceſtors, from whom only he derived any importance at all; and the "puny inſect ſhivering at a breeze," ſwelled with conſcious pride when he recited the names of heroes from whom he had ſo woefully degenerated.

This pride of anceſtry was now the moſt diſtinguiſhing feature in a character where it appeared with the greateſt prominence, from the faintneſs and inſipidity of the other traits, for being no longer able to purſue the diſſolute manner of life which he had adopted rather from faſhion than inclination, he had now in other reſpects no character at all.

Miſs Maclaurin, who began to ſtudy him as ſoon as he was received by her father, ſoon ſaw it, and ſaw it with diſmay; for ſhe ſuppoſed that it would be an inſuperable bar to thoſe hopes, which ſhe thought ſhe might otherwiſe very reaſonably entertain.

The Doctor however had too many reſources to be ſo eaſily diſcouraged. He fabricated with admirable ingenuity a ſtory, of which he juſtly ſuppoſed the ignorance and indolence of his patient would prevent his ever detecting the falſehood. He ſaid that he was really a Hamilton, and

and had taken his preſent name in compliance with the whim of a diſtant relation, who had on that condition given him his property. The only objection being thus removed, Miſs Maclaurin had a fair-field for her attractive talents; and they were ſo effectually exerted, that in about five months after Lord Caſtlenorth's reception into the family of Maclaurin, he became himſelf a member of it, and Miſs Maclaurin returned to England as his wife.

That her father might ſtill retain, without too ſcrupulous an enquiry, his relationſhip to the houſe of Hamilton; and that her mother's coarſe figure and coarſer manners might be no diſgrace to Lady Caſtlenorth in the ſphere where ſhe now prepared to blaze, ſhe prevailed upon them to retire to their native country on a penſion which there gave them conſequence: while her Ladyſhip, who while ſhe was Miſs Maclaurin had nothing doubted of her own eminent perfections, was now ſo convinced of their irreſiſtible power by their having thus eſtabliſhed her in a ſituation ſo much above her hopes, that ſhe thought herſelf born for the government and amendment of the world, and from that period h[illegible] been advancing in arrogance and oſtentation till the preſent hour; when at the age of fifty, with an unweildy perſon and a broad face, where high cheek bones appeared emulous of giving ſome protection to two grey prominent eyes, whoſe lids ſeemed inadequate to ſhade them, Lady Caſtlenorth was as well by her rank as her talents and her travels, qualified in her own opinion for univerſal dominion. Not content therefore with governing her Lord with deſpotic ſway, (which

indeed ſaved him the trouble and probably the diſgrace of governing himſelf) ſhe aſſumed towards the reſt of the world a ſtyle equally dictatorial. Her opinion was ſtrongly enforced on every topic that came before her; in private anecdote, in public debates, in literature, in politics, in faſhions, ſhe was equally omniſcient; and whether the converſation ran on taxes or on taſte, in laying out grounds or on ſetting out a dinner, in making a peace or a poem, ſhe underſtood all, deſcanted on all, and could decide on all, in a way from which few of her auditors had at the moment courage to appeal.

By the ſide of this majeſtic figure, her Lord, the deſcendant of the old Earls of Glouceſter, of Welſh Princes and Engliſh Kings, ſunk into inſignificance. His diminutive figure, now ſhrunk by age and ſickneſs, his ſallow and withered countenance, and his feeble ſtep, formed a decided contraſt to his robuſt and Juno-like lady, by whom he ſuffered himſelf to be led about, without ever pretending to diſſent from her opinion, unleſs in matters of heraldry or genealogy, where he ſtill ventured to take the lead, in which ſhe was for the moſt part willing to indulge him. His Lordſhip's ill health had made him alſo converſant in phyſic; a ſcience in which, notwithſtanding her hereditary claim to it, Lady Caſtlenorth had not ſhewn much diſpoſition to contend with him: but as there was more trouble and diſguſt than honour to be obtained by a conſtant attention to it, as applied to his real or imaginary complaints, ſhe had very frequently delegated her authority, and at length quite relinquiſhed her knowledge, to a relation, who

who being a widow (and ſaid to poſſeſs a pretty fortune though nobody ever knew where it lay) now about ſix and forty, had with infinite philanthropy dedicated her days to relieve the infirmities of her fellow creatures without any other advantage than that of being received in turn at their houſes. She knew every receipt, whether of diet or medecine, that could be named, as preventative or cure; underſtood the preparation of every quack remedy, and the qualities of all the drugs of which they are compounded: nor was ſhe leſs acquainted with the human frame; and would in all companies give the hiſtory of any complaint to which it is ſubject in technical terms, to the wonder of ſome and the terror of many hearers. Such were the manners of Mrs. Calder; and her perſon was one of thoſe, which but for their ſingularity, nobody would ever recollect as having ſeen at all. She now reſided almoſt conſtantly with Lord and Lady Caſtlenorth, to both of whom ſhe had contrived to render herſelf neceſſary. With them ſhe had been abroad, (where ſhe had greatly improved her ſtock of knowledge, and had actually written a treatiſe on the goitres of the Alpine peaſants, which Lady Caſtlenorth was poliſhing for publication,) and ſhe was now of the party who were aſſembled at Mrs. Molyneux's; where the laſt but not the leaſt in conſequence appeared alſo—the deſtined bride of Willoughby.

The claim of this young lady to eminent beauty, or to any thing more than a barely tolerable perſon, would certainly not have been allowed, had ſhe not been heireſs to the illuſ-

trious houſe of Fitz-Hayman; but the eſcutcheon of pretence, which ſhe had a right to, ſeemed to give her a pretence alſo, to much of what nature had very ſcantily allowed her. She was as tall and almoſt as large as her mother, whom ſhe greatly reſembled. Her complexion was brown, and as her hair was not dark, the want of contraſt produced a muddy and heavy effect, which nothing could have relieved but two dark eyes, whoſe powers were aſſiſted by a greater quantity of rouge than unmarried ladies are even by the French cuſtoms uſually allowed. What expreſſion they naturally had however was not pleaſing, and what they borrowed from this addition added more to their fierceneſs than their luſtre. They were eyes of "high claims and expectations," which demanded rather than ſolicited admiration, and ſignified pretty plainly the real diſpoſition of a character, inflated with ideas of its own conſequence, and conſidering more than half the world as beings of another ſpecies, whoſe evils ſhe could not feel for, becauſe ſhe was placed where it was impoſſible ſhe could ever ſhare them.

To the perſonal arrogance of her mother, ſhe added the hereditary pride of her father: the firſt had taught her that hardly any man could deſerve ſo perfect and accompliſhed a creature; the ſecond, that it was more deſirable to unite herſelf with Willoughby and thus continue her own illuſtrious race, than loſe or ſhare her conſequence by marrying a nobleman of ſuperior rank. Some degree of perſonal partiality too,

too, contributed to render this reſolution more pleaſing to her; for though ſhe had not ſeen her couſin for between three and four years, his graceful and beautiful form when he left Eton, with his dark auburn hair flowing over his ſhoulders, had made a very laſting impreſſion in his favor.

CHAPTER V.

SUCH was the group, which, at a very late hour in the evening, entered the dining-room of Mrs. Molyneux, who, with her huſband and Celeſtina, received them in the uſual forms. Lady Caſtlenorth, as uſual, took the lead in converſation, having firſt ſatisfied herſelf that Mrs. Molyneux had ſent for Willoughby, and heard her aſſurances that he would certainly be in town the firſt moment he poſſibly could after hearing of the arrival of his noble relations.

"What ſort of taſte, my dear," cried her Ladyſhip to Mrs. Molyneux, "is this apartment fitted up in?—Is this the preſent ſtyle in England?—I think it extremely ugly."

This was trenching on Matilda in a very tender point. Taſte was her reigning foible; and the houſe had, on her recent marriage, been fitted up under her directions at an immenſe expence. To have her elegance called ſo abruptly in queſtion, therefore was very far from being pleaſant, and ſhe anſwered coldly—"I am ſorry you diſlike

like it: it is, I believe, the neweſt ſtyle of doing rooms. To what does your Ladyſhip object?"

"Oh, to the whole. Theſe ſort of papers are unclaſſical and glaring: I don't like the colour of your furniture neither."

"Nor I," interrupted Mrs. Calder; "'tis terrible for the eyes: does not your Lordſhip find it dazzling and inconvenient even by candle-light?" She then began to explain the effect of glaring and ſtrong colours on the viſual orb, when Lady Caſtlenorth, who had no intention to throw the converſation into her hands, turned abruptly towards Celeſtina, of whom ſhe had hitherto taken no notice, and ſaid, looking ſteadily at her while ſhe addreſſed Mrs. Molyneux, "That, I think, is the young woman whom your late mother *ſaid* ſhe took out of a convent ſomewhere in France, is it not?" Mrs. Molyneux anſwering in the affirmative, Lady Caſtlenorth, her eyes ſtill fixed on the object of her enquiry, ſaid, "Aye, I thought I recollected her:——Umph!——and ſo Mrs. Willoughby provided for her, did ſhe?—Well! and is ſhe to live on with you, as ſhe did in your mother's time?"

"Only a few days longer, Madam," ſaid Celeſtina, who had borne very impatiently this rude and unfeeling ſcrutiny; "I am then going to reſide entirely in the country."

"I am glad of it, child," replied the lady; for I always conſider it as a misfortune when girls are educated above their fortune, and introduced into a ſtyle of life they have no pretenſions to. Indeed, I gave Mrs. Willoughby my opi-

nion about you repeatedly in your infancy. I did not then know that her circumſtances allowed her, in juſtice to *her huſband's* children, to provide ſo amply for another. However, though it was a great deal for to do, it is not by any means a fortune to authorize you with prudence to continue to live about town. You took, I think, your Chriſtian name from the order of Nuns among whom you were reared; and your ſurname——I mean the name they gave you—it has eſcaped me?"

"My name, Madam," ſaid Celeſtina, whoſe tears were reſtrained only by indignation, "is De Mornay."

"True; I recollect it now. I remember I enquired of Mrs. Willoughby, whether when they gave you that name they had any reaſon to fancy you any way related to the family of the famous du Pleſſis Mornay; but I think ſhe told me no, and that you received that appellation becauſe the Superior to whoſe care you were entruſted had ſome fanciful partiality to the name."

To this no anſwer being given, the converſation took another turn, but was ſtill engroſſed by Lady Caſtlenorth; while Mrs. Molyneux, wearied to death, propoſed cards, and making a table with the noble pair, Mrs. Calder and her huſband, ſhe ſat down herſelf by Miſs Fitz-Hayman, and endeavoured to enter into converſation with her.

Miſs Fitz-Hayman however, who never loved her couſin becauſe ſhe had heard her reckoned handſome, and who was out of humour to find

that

that Willoughby was not yet arrived, though there was barely time for him to have come expreſs, received all her advances with more than her uſual haughty indifference; add while ſhe anſwered in ſhort ſentences or mere monoſyllables, ſhe now examined with looks of diſlike the ſtudied but becoming dreſs of Mrs. Molyneux, now, with yet more unpleaſant expreſſion, glanced with averted head, from the corners of her eyes, on Celeſtina, who without any ſtudy at all was infinitely more beautiful.

Theſe ſcowling looks of mingled malignity and contempt, added to the behaviour of Lady Caſtlenorth towards her, had by this time rendered the room ſo diſagreeable to her, that ſhe left it as ſoon as ſhe could. A loud rap at the door however ſoon after announced the arrival of other viſitors; and ſome ladies coming in who had finiſhed their circle of viſits for that evening, Mrs. Molyneux, as tired of the daughter's ſilence as ſhe had before been of the mother's loquacity, propoſed a table at *vingt un*, which Celeſtina was immediately deſired to join.

The party were hardly placed at it, before Mr. Molyneux was informed by his gentleman, that Mr. Willoughby was below and aſked to ſpeak to him. "Deſire him to come up," replied he, without any ſeeming conſciouſneſs of the formidable nature of the interview he was to go through.

"He is in boots, Sir," replied the ſervant, "and deſired me to ſay that he is going immediately to his lodgings."

"Oh

"Oh but we ſhall not let him go," ſaid Molyneux. "Do Mrs. Molyneux," continued he, addreſſing himſelf to his wife, "do go down and bring up this brother of your's."

Mrs. Molyneux roſe and left the room. Lady Caſtlenorth, ſtill appearing to attend to her game, turned her fiercely-queſtioning eyes, firſt on her daughter, who might have bluſhed if her complexion had been calculated to ſhew the ſuffuſion of blood, and then unluckily they were attracted by the more unequivocal and deep roſe colour, which for a moment took poſſeſſion of the face of Celeſtina, who ſat next to her.

There was no time to comment on this appearance before it was heightened by the entrance of Willoughby, who was immediately led by his ſiſter to Lord Caſtlenorth, then to her Ladyſhip, and at length to Miſs Fitz-Hayman. He paid his compliments to all with his uſual graceful manners, but not without an expreſſion of pain and embarraſſment in his countenance, which he ſeemed vainly trying to ſhake off. He had yet diſtinguiſhed nobody in the room but thoſe to whom he had been ſpeaking; but on recovering from the low bow he had made to Miſs Fitz-Hayman, he ſaw Celeſtina; and ſtarting, he ſaid in a hurrying way——"Miſs De Mornay! I thought you had left my ſiſter! I hope I ſee you well! Celeſtina anſwered only by a curtſey; and Willoughby turning away towards Mrs. Molyneux, told her that he was a good deal fatigued, and muſt beg her to excuſe him for the reſt of the evening, but that he would

would be with her the following morning to breakfaſt. "Your Lordſhip," added he turning to his uncle, "will perhaps allow me to pay my reſpects to you and Lady Caſtlenorth in the courſe of the morning:" then without waiting for the reply which his Lordſhip was in great form waiting to give him, he hurried out of the room, and the card tables very ſoon afterwards broke up.

Though Willoughby was very much altered ſince Miſs Fitz-Hayman had laſt ſeen him, the change appeared greatly in his favour. His undreſs, and the agitation he was apparently in, which ſhe imputed to the effect of her charms, combined to make him appear more intereſting both to the mother and daughter; and as they went home, Lord Caſtlenorth, who grew every day fonder of the propoſed marriage, ſpoke much in praiſe of his nephew's figure and manner. He has a great deal, ſaid he, of the family countenance. He ſtrikes me, indeed he always did from a boy, as reſembling greatly the picture painted on board of William, ſon of Robert Fitz-Hayman, Seneſchal to Henry II. who obtained the grants of the eſtate in Glouceſterſhire. His arms were azure, a lion rampant, gardant or; the original bearing of the family; you ſee it ſo in the great window of the hall at Caſtlenorth: the next is that of his wife, party per pale, two griffins counter ſailant, ſable, langued gules. This is my firſt quarter for the name of Bigot, a daughter of which houſe, this William, ſon of Robert, married." Lord Caſtlenorth was now got on his favourite topic, and in the numberleſs quarterings of his preſent bearing, he quite forgot the

the merits of his nephew, and was buſied among wyverns and boars, pearls, ſaltiers, feſſes and bend dexters, till they arrived at their own houſe. The imaginations however of the reſt of the company finding nothing to arreſt them in a detail ſo often repeated, had all left him to ſettle his chevrons and chevronels his own way; even the attentive and complaiſant Mrs. Calder was conſidering whether a lady in the company they had left, who had related her complaints to her, was in a right courſe of medicine; Lady Caſtlenorth was laying up a little magazine of literature, which ſhe intended to open on Willoughby the next day; and her daughter was contemplating in her mind's eye, the handſome perſon of Willoughby, the figure they ſhould make at Court, and the triumph there would be, when without degrading herſelf, by an unequal alliance in point of family, ſhe ſhould notwithſtanding carry to her huſband ſo ſplendid a fortune, and titles ſo ancient and illuſtrious.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VI.

THE party the noble viſitors had left were very differently employed: Mrs. Molyneux, almoſt always accuſtomed to be heard with attention and ſubmitted to with deference as a beauty and a woman of exquiſite taſte, was piqued and offended by the air of ſuperior intelligence aſſumed by Lady Caſtlenorth, who treated her like a child that knew nothing. Miſs Fitz-Hayman too had not expreſſed any admiration at her dreſs and figure, but had viewed her with ſupercilious ſilence; while Mrs. Calder, from knowing her to be a young married woman, had with more curioſity than elegance enquired whether ſhe was likely to give the Molyneux family the heir ſo much deſired by the older part of it; a queſtion which extremely diſguſted her. Lord Caſtlenorth, who had complimented her upon her perſon, particularly on her long Chineſe eyes, and the form of her face, which

which he ſaid was extremely like that of Gertrude Fitz-Hayman, ſome time Maid of Honor to Catharine of Arragon, and afterwards Conntes of Powis,) was, ſhe declared to Mr. Molyneux, the only tolerable creature of the party. "My uncle," ſaid ſhe, as ſoon as they were alone, "my uncle is a reaſonable being; but for the reſt! did you ever ſee a plainer woman than Miſs Fitz-Hayman? her clothes might be French, but I am ſure ſhe looks abſolutely Dutch in them. Its really a misfortune at her time of life to be ſo large."

Molyneux careleſsly anſwered—"You ſee ſhe is ſenſible of the misfortune by her endeavours to conceal it: but 'tis more witty than wiſe, I think, to find fault with her. Willoughby *can ſee* I ſuppoſe as well as you can, and I don't think it very politic in you to give him your authority for diſliking her. Let him marry her, and then hate and abuſe her as much as you will."

"Oh!" replied the lady, "I ſhall always deteſt her, and——"

"So I dare ſay will he" interrupted Molyneux; "but let them be once married, and all that is very immaterial to you: it is by no means ſo, that your brother cannot, till he does marry, pay the ſecond five thouſands pounds of your fortune, unleſs he ſells the Withcombe eſtate, which indeed the mortgagee is, as far as I can learn, very impatient to take poſſeſſion of with this charge upon it, which he will immediately pay off. You ſee that Willoughby has no choice—matrimony or the diſmembering his eſtates; and pray never put it into his head to heſitate." This affectionate brother in law then went

went to his own dreſſing room, and Mrs. Molyneux taking a candle, ſurveying herſelf in the great glaſs, and wondering how it was poſſible ſuch a figure and face could fail to attract univerſal admiration from all ages and ſexes, retired to her bed.

The contemplations of poor Celeſtina, who had left them the moment the company diſperſed, were much more painful. The ſight of Willoughby, his ſurprize, and, as ſhe thought, his diſpleaſure at finding her ſtill there, were as poiſoned arrows in her breaſt. But the pride of conſcious worth, aided by her diſintereſted affection for him, enabled her, though not to heal, yet to endure without weak complainings, the exquiſite pain they inflicted, and to give her courage immediately to execute the deſign ſhe had long formed of withdrawing herſelf from his ſight for ever. It was now impoſſible for her to ſet out the next day, but that immediately following it ſhe fixed for her departure; and after a night in which ſhe enjoyed very little repoſe, ſhe aroſe early in order to make the immediate preparations for her journey, which ſhe determined, in order to ſave expence, to make in the Exeter ſtage.

As ſhe was deſirous of giving as little trouble as poſſible to Mr. Molyneux's ſervants, who were all people of great conſequence and would any of them have thought ſuch a commiſſion degrading, ſhe determined to go herſelf into the city, where places were to be taken. It was yet ſo early when ſhe went down to execute this intention, that only the houſemaid was ſtirring, and the windows of the parlour only were opened:

ed: there Celeſtina ſat while the maid went into the kitchen to get her a glaſs of milk and water, which ſhe had aſked for; and while ſhe yet trifled with it, being indeed afraid to venture into the ſtreets till ſhe ſaw more people in them, ſhe heard the ſervant, who was at the door duſting the hall and ſteps, ſpeak to ſomebody who entered, and the inſtant afterwards Willoughby came into the room where ſhe was.

She aroſe trembling and amazed from her ſeat. "Miſs De Mornay," ſaid he, "ſo early prepared to go out?" Celeſtina anſwered—"yes," and ſat down again. He laid down his hat on the ſide board; and as if he knew not what to ſay, went to the window.

Celeſtina ſat motionleſs; and Willoughby, after ſtanding there a moment, ſeemed aſhamed of his ſilence yet afraid to ſpeak. He traverſed the room, mended the fire, and complaining of the cold, at length ventured to enquire of Celeſtina what induced her to venture out at ſo early an hour of ſo unpleaſant a morning? She replied calmly, for ſhe had by this time regained her compoſure, that ſhe had buſineſs in the city.

"Buſineſs in the city?" cried Willoughby; "and at this time of the day! Ah! Celeſtina! there was a time when you would not thus have anſwered my enquiry." He was going on, when Celeſtina interrupted him:

"There was indeed," ſaid ſhe with a deep ſigh, "a time when you would not have made it."

"Not have made it!" anſwered he; "was I not then ever intereſted in all that concerned you,

you, and was any action of your's indifferent to me?"

He faultered and ſtopped. "I was once ſimple enough to think ſo indeed," ſaid Celeſtina, "and in thoſe days of fortunate illuſion you certainly would have made no ſuch enquiry as the preſent, becauſe I ſhould then have done nothing of which you would hot have known the motive, nor have taken any meaſure without the concurrence of my brother and my friend; but as you told me yourſelf—would I could forget it!—that it was no longer in your power to retain thoſe characters towards me, I am learning to forget that I ever was ſo happy as to fancy that no change in my ſituation, eſpecially a change for the worſe, could rob me of that regard ſo valuable always, ſo particularly valuable now!"

"Gracious heaven!" cried Willoughby, entirely thrown off his guard by her words and manner—"How have I acted, what have I ſaid, to deſerve this reproach from you Celeſtina? When we parted laſt——"

She again interrupted him—"Did we part like friends? like brother and ſiſter?"

"No." replied he haſtily; "but I tore myſelf from you like a man who ſacrifices, to the performance of a fatal promiſe, his own happineſs, and who is the victim of family pride and family neceſſity." This ſentence was deciſive. His reſolution forſook him at once, and his long ſtifled affection burſt through all the reſtraints he determined to lay on it. "Oh! Celeſtina!" continued he, "you whom I loved before I knew what it was to love! you whom I now adore with a paſſion too ſtrong for my reaſon! do not, do not,

not, I beſeech you, aggravate my ſufferings. I promiſed to my mother—and you know how well ſhe deſerved to be obeyed—I promiſed to unite myſelf with her niece; I promiſed to extirpate from my heart an inclination that even then I could not conceal. Raſh and ridiculous promiſe! No, Celeſtina, it is impoſſible for me to ceaſe loving you! All my behaviour, which you have thought cold and unfriendly, was a part I was acting in oppoſition to my real affections! I can ſuſtain it no longer: I cannot bear that you ſhould think of me with indifference: and yet ——Oh! my mother, what a cruel taſk have you impoſed on me! Celeſtina, pity me; I am more wretched than you can imagine!" His agitation now became too violent: he ſeized the hand of Celeſtina, and fervently kiſſed it, while her own ſenſations were ſuch as no language can deſcribe. That Willoughby loved her, that what ſhe had conſidered as indifference was owing to the ſtruggle between his duty and his tenderneſs, was tranſport ſuch as obliterated every other ſentiment. But this delirium laſted but a moment: her reaſon, her genuine affection for him, told her, that to indulge this tenderneſs was injurious to him, and ſhe determined to ſhew that ſhe could ſacrifice herſelf to this advantage, and that contented with his brotherly attachment, ſhe could reſign him to the fortunate Miſs Fitz-Hayman. The terms however in which ſhe declared this, the ſoftneſs of her voice, and her eyes filled with tears, were little calculated to reconcile Willoughby to the reſolution, which, after a long dialogue, ſhe urged him to adopt; ſhe aſſured him that whatever might be her own fate, ſhe ſhould never

never forgive herſelf where ſhe to be the means of his breaking a promiſe ſo ſolemnly given, and given at ſuch a time, to her dear deceaſed benefactreſs. "No! my brother," ſaid ſhe, "ſhe is dead, but my obligations to her can never be annihilated; and what would become of me, were I ever to feel myſelf reproached for ingratitude to her memory, were I to deſtroy the fabric ſhe had raiſed for the happineſs of her beloved ſon, and to fancy that the ſpirit of my more than mother, which I now often invocate with conſcious pleaſure, ſhould, inſtead of beholding her Celeſtina with complacency not unſuited to her preſent ſtate of happineſs, ſee her degraded into a ſelfiſh and unworthy being, who repays her benefits with the blackeſt ingratitude."

Willoughby, whoſe love, once ſuffered to obtain the advantage, now acquired more power every moment, combated theſe objections with very dangerous eloquence; telling Celeſtina that he had determined the evening before, on a ſight of Miſs Fitz-Hayman, who was inſupportable to him, to put an end to the negociation, and ſay plainly to his uncle that it was impoſſible for him to fulfil an engagement in which his heart never had any ſhare. Celeſtina repreſented to him the ſituation of his fortune; the abſolute neceſſity there was for his marrying one who could repair its deficiency, and reſtore him to the ſplendid affluence of his anceſtors; but for this he talked of œconomy and ſimplicity, by which when they lived entirely at Alveſtone he ſhould be

able

able to repair every thing; then for a moment indulging his vivid imagination in painting the happineſs they ſhould enjoy there together, (images of felicity which reflected in ſtronger colours thoſe which Celeſtina had a thouſand times formed, though knowing they could never be realized,) he thought ſuddenly of the fatal promiſe he had given to his mother, and his heart ſeemed to ſhrink from the idea of breaking it to obtain even the higheſt human happineſs, which under ſuch circumſtances he felt would be daſhed with gall. He obtained however from Celeſtina, but not without difficulty, a promiſe that ſhe would lay ſide her intentions of going into the city that morning to prepare for her journey, of which he would not hear; and ſhe prevailed upon him to wait on Lord Caſtlenorth, as he had aſſured the family he would do: "Though wherefore ſhould I do it," ſaid he, "unleſs to put an end at once and for ever to all thoughts of this odious marriage."

"You ought ſurely," replied Celeſtina, to "wait on the brother of your mother tho' no ſuch connexion had been thought of: and no diſlike which you may have conceived to Miſs Fitz-Hayman as your wife, ſhould induce you to forget what you owe to your uncle.

By arguments thus reaſonable, Celeſtina, while ſhe prevailed on Willoughby to do what was, he was forced to own, proper, would have rivetted his chains, if indeed they had not already been immoveable. The noble candour and diſintereſted generoſity of her ſoul, gave tenfold

fold force to the charms of her perſon, which ſince he had laſt ſeen her, Willoughby thought greatly improved: and the tenderneſs of her manner, the certainty of her affection for him, which ſhe tried to conceal with more kindneſs than ſucceſs, had altogether ſuch an effect on him, that nothing but the fatal promiſe which lay ſo heavy on his heart, could have prevented his marrying her immediately, in deſpite of every conſideration of prudence or family engagement.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VII.

WHILE Celeſtina remained with Willoughby, the very tumult and agitation of her heart had ſuſtained her courage, and like a fever that lends momentary ſtrength to the patient it is deſtroying, this diſorder of her ſpirits had ſupported her againſt the flood of tenderneſs that overwhelmed her as ſoon as ſhe was alone. A conflict then began between her affection for him, and her duty and gratitude towards the memory of his mother, which was almoſt too ſevere to be endured; but however ſoft her heart, her reaſon was equal to the taſk of checking a dangerous or guilty indulgence of that ſenſibility; and after long arguing with herſelf, ſhe found ſhe loved Willoughby better than every thing but his honour and his repoſe.

The firſt, and too probably the ſecond, ſhe ſaw too plainly that he muſt forfeit, by yielding to an affection, which circumſtanced as he was, would perhaps be as fatal to both as it certainly was

was to his pecuniary intereſt. She had heard Mr. Molyneux ſay, who had his reaſons for repeating it before her, that nothing but his marrying a woman as opulent as Miſs Fitz-Hayman, could prevent his ſelling the greater part of his eſtates; "and in that caſe," added he, "I don't ſee how he can avoid diſpoſing of Alveſtone too; for with the income he will then have, to think of keeping up ſuch a place as that, would be quite inſanity." Celeſtina knew that no blow could fall ſo heavy on the heart of Willoughby, as the cruel neceſſity of ſelling this his paternal ſeat; and though ſhe was flattered and delighted when he had juſt before declared to her, that to obtain her every deprivation would be eaſy, ſhe knew, while ſhe now more cooly reflected on it, his local attachment to be ſo ſtrong, that it was very probable his love would ſoon yield to the regret which would ariſe from their ſacrifice. "What would become of me," ſaid ſhe, as ſhe meditated on this matter, "were I to be the wife of Willoughby, and to ſee him unhappy that I was ſo? He would have broken his faith to his mother; he who has always been taught to hold the ſlighteſt promiſe ſacred; he would ſee his eſtate diſmembered; even Alveſton the place he ſo loves, would paſs into the hands of ſtrangers, and it would be to me he would owe his indigence and his unhappineſs! How dare I ſuppoſe that my affection, warm and ſincere as it is, could make him any amends for all thoſe mortifications. Oh; let me not ſuppoſe it, nor ever think of riſking it. I can bear to quit him now—I believe I can—but how ſhould I endure to find myſelf the ſource of repentance to him! how ſhould I ever ſurvive ſeeing him decidedly unhappy, with the conſci-

ouſneſs that he owed his being ſo to his partiality for me."

Theſe reflections, and above all the obligation by which he had bound himſelf to obey the laſt injunctions of his mother, determined Celeſtina as to the conduct ſhe ought to adopt; and having once ſeen it by the light lent by integrity and diſintereſted love to her ſtrong and excellent underſtanding, ſhe haſtened to execute it, and certain that he was engaged for the reſt of the morning, ſhe had no ſooner breakfaſted than ſhe told Mrs. Molyneux ſhe was going to make ſome purchaſes for which ſhe had occaſion before ſhe left London, and getting into an hackney coach, was driven into the city, where ſhe ſecured a place in the Exeter ſtage, which was to leave London at a very early hour the next day. She returned to the houſe of Mrs. Molyneux about twelve o'clock, and then learned, that ſhe and her huſband were engaged to dine at Lord Caſtlenorth's, where a very large party were to aſſemble. In the card which Lady Caſtlenorth had ſent to invite them, no mention was made of Celeſtina nor was any ſeparate card ſent to her. "It is mere forgetfulneſs I fancy," ſaid Mrs. Molyneux as ſhe mentioned it to her: "you will go however, as the ceremony of an invitation is not very material."

"Pardon me," replied Celeſtina, "it appears to me of ſo much conſequence in the preſent caſe, that I certainly ſhall not go without it. I am indeed very glad to be excuſed, and I am ſure you will not urge me to violate etiquette in a matter where to forbear doing it is ſo particularly deſirable."

Mrs.

Mrs. Molyneux, very ſolicitous about the contents of certain band boxes with which her woman entered at that moment, forbore to preſs her farther, and Celeſtina deſiring her to let her know when ſhe was dreſſed, that ſhe might ſee her before ſhe went, retired to her own room, leaving her friend to the pleaſing and important occupation of the toilet, in which half what is now called morning, was uſually paſſed by Matilda.

Celeſtina had promiſed Willoughby to give up for that day her intention of fixing her journey; but this promiſe ſhe thought herſelf well juſtified in breaking. The entertainment at Lord Caſtlenorth's was given on his account: of courſe he would be engaged the whole day; and ſince ſhe muſt go, ſhe deſired nothing ſo much as to be ſpared the fruitleſs pain of a farther diſcuſion of the ſubject, and the miſery, which ſhe was not ſure her reſolution would ſupport, of bidding him a laſt farewel.

At a little after five however, after ſhe had undergone the form of ſitting down alone to table, where ſhe eat nothing, and had then retired to her own room, Mrs, Willoughby's woman came to ſay that her miſtreſs was dreſſed. Celeſtina had once determined to tell Mrs. Molyneux how ſoon ſhe meant to quit her, and to have taken leave of her, but on reflection ſhe thought her doing ſo might betray her reſolution to Willoughby, from whom it was neceſſary to conceal it till it was actually executed. She now therefore intended to leave a letter of thanks, and to take leave of Mrs. Molyneux as if it was only till the next day.

But when the moment approached in which ſhe was in reality to bid adieu——perhaps for ever—to the friend and companion of her infancy—to the daughter of her beloved friend—to the ſiſter of Willoughby—her heart ſunk within her; and hardly had ſhe ſtrength to go to the door of Mrs. Molyneux's dreſſing-room, on opening which, ſhe ſaw her friend ſtanding before the glaſs putting the laſt finiſh to her very elegant dreſs, while with her eyes fixed on her own figure, ſhe was arguing with more than her uſual warmth with ſome perſon who ſat beſide her, and who Celeſtina preſently diſcovered to be Willoughby himſelf, in boots, and his hair out of powder. His countenance was pale and dejected; and while his ſiſter talked to him, he leaned with one arm on another chair, and ſeemed rather muſing than attending.

"I am glad you are come," ſaid Mrs Molyneux to Celeſtina as ſhe entered, "for here is George behaving quite abſurdly: he will not go he ſays to Lord Caſtlenorth's, though the dinner is made on purpoſe for him. Do Celeſtina——he minds your opinion always more than mine—do try to make him underſtand how very abſurd and oddly he acts."

"I have no talents," Celeſtina would have ſaid but the words died away on her lips; and before ſhe could collect courage to finiſh the ſentence, Molyneux, who was now ready, came in, and ſeeing Willoughby unprepared to go, expreſſed his ſurprize in terms which were warmer than Willoughby could hear with perfect command of temper. "Surely, Sir," ſaid he, "I am

am my own maſter. I am not diſpoſed to go, and I will not go!"

"And what am I to ſay," cried Mrs. Molyneux, "to Lady Caſtlenorth, to my uncle, and to my couſin?"

"Juſt what you pleaſe," replied he.

Molyneux, finding by the tone in which his brother-in-law ſpoke, that he would not be dictated to, now called his wife out of the room, and Willoughby and Celeſtina were left alone.

It was now that all her fortitude and ſtrength of mind were neceſſary. Her duty evidently was to perſuade Willoughby to accompany his ſiſter, and to complete a marriage which his mother had when dying enjoined: a marriage ſo neceſſary to the acquiſition of all that the world calls happineſs in life, and on which depended the continuance of his family eſtate in his poſſeſſion. But her heart refuſed to aſſent to what her reaſon pointed out as the conduct ſhe ought to purſue, and the affection he now ſo evidently had for her; adding to the ſtrength of her long attachment to him, ſhe found it impoſſible to urge his quitting her for ever, though ſhe thought ſhe had yet courage enough to tear herſelf from him if ſhe heard not his complaints, nor witneſſed his agonies while ſhe combated her own.

"I cannot—I will not go to theſe people,—ſaid Willoughby, after a ſhort ſilence: why ſhould I? ſince to marry Miſs Fitz-Hayman would be the height of cruelty to her—ſince I am incapable of diſſimulation—ſince——In ſhort, Celeſtina, I feel it to be impoſſible for me to live

live without you; and I have determined to declare myself in writing to that effect."

Celestina, whom this speech was not calculated to calm, answered, trembling—"Indeed I think you wrong, Mr. Willoughby. As your uncle, as your mother's brother, Lord Castlenorth has undoubtedly a claim to this mark of respect. It is not probably expected to be any thing more than a visit of form, and surely you ought not rudely and without reason to decline it."

"If it *were indeed* meant only as a visit of ceremony," said he——

"It is in your power however," interrupted Celestina, "to appear to consider it so: your not going must seem very extraordinary; your going certainly leads to no consequence."

"If you think so," replied Willoughby; "if you think I ought to go.—But why did they not ask you?"

"Why should they ask me?" answered she. "I am almost unknown to Lady Castlenorth; and in the little time I ever did see her, I appeared to be no favourite. Believe me, so far from being displeased, I am rejoiced at the omission."

"Insolent, odious woman!" cried Willoughby. "If any thing could add to my dislike of her and her daughter, it would be the supercilious airs they gave themselves towards you even in the short moment I saw them here. But my Celestina shall never be exposed to their insulting scorn; and if I myself this time undergo the punishment of keeping up the hateful farce which I have so unhappily been engaged in,

in, it ſhall be with a determination to put an end to it."

At this moment Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux entered the room; and Celeſtina wiſhing them all an agreeable day, left it; having ſuſtained with ſome difficulty the various emotions which were contending in her boſom. Willoughby ſoon after left the houſe, to dreſs at his own lodgings, which were in the neighbourhood, and having promiſed to join his brother and ſiſter at dinner, they ſoon after departed themſelves, much better ſatisfied with him than they were before his ſhort converſation with Celeſtina.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VIII.

CELESTINA, though more unwilling than ever to go, had preſcribed to herſelf in her cooler moments a line of conduct, from which, feeling it her duty to adhere to it, ſhe now determined not to depart. In arguing with herſelf on its propriety, and ſtrengthening her faultering reſolution, ſhe paſſed the night. At four o'clock the ſervant who was commiſſioned to awaken her, came to her door: ſhe aroſe and dreſſed herſelf by candle-light: the morning was cold and dark: every object appeared dreary and forlorn: ſhe hurried on her clothes however, and endeavoured to drive away every recollection that might enfeeble her ſpirits too much; but, as ſhe paſſed the door of the drawing room, ſhe remembered that it was there ſhe had ſeen Willoughby perhaps for the laſt time, and almoſt involuntarily ſhe went in, and by the light of her ſolitary candle,

dle, contemplated a whole length picture of him which had juſt been finiſhed for his ſiſter: the likeneſs was ſo ſtrong, that by the wavering and uncertain light that fell upon it, ſhe almoſt fancied he was about to ſpeak to her: ſhe ſtarted at the idea, and feeling a ſort of chilly terror at the ſilence and obſcurity of every thing around her, ſhe turned away and haſtened to the ſervant who had prepared her tea in the parlour: ſhe had however hardly time to drink it, before the hackney coach which had been ordered the night before was at the door; and having ſeen what little baggage ſhe had not before ſent put into it, ſhe ſtepped in herſelf, and was ſoon at a diſtance from the reſidence of Mrs. Molyneux, from the friend of her early years, and was launched alone and unprotected into a world of which ſhe had yet ſeen nothing but through the favourable medium lent by affluence and proſperity to thoſe who from thence contemplate difficulties they are never likely to encounter and calamities they probably never can participate.

That a young woman, who might ſtill have enjoyed thoſe indulgences, ſhould renounce them at an age when they have ſo many charms; that Celeſtina, who had been educated with ſo much delicacy, and accuſtomed ſince her firſt recollection to every indulgence, ſhould thus voluntarily enter on a life of comparative hardſhip and deprivation, may appear improbable, but when it is added that ſhe quitted the man to whom ſhe had ſo long been fondly attached, and leaving him to her fortunate rival, devoted herſelf to a life of ſolitude and regret, ſuch an effort of heroiſm in a woman not yet quite nineteen, might

be

be claſſed among impoſſibilities, were it related of an other than Celeſtina: but her character was an uncommon one: though ſhe had always been told by Mrs. Willoughby that her birth was very uncertain, and that nothing was known of it but that it was diſgraceful to her parents, ſince they had taken ſuch pains to conceal it, ſhe felt within herſelf a conſciouſneſs of hereditary worth, an innate pride, which would never ſuffer her to believe herſelf deſcended from mean or unworthy perſons: her open and commanding countenance, where ſat dignity mingled with ſweetneſs; her nymph-like and graceful form, which might have rivalled the models of Grecian art; were advantages of which, though ſhe was not vain of them, ſhe could not be inſenſible, and if ſhe had any foible, (a perfect character it has been ſaid muſt not be repreſented becauſe it cannot exiſt) if ſhe had any foible, it was carrying a little too far, though ſhe carefully concealed it, that ſort of pride which ſeemed born with her, and which, after all that has been ſaid againſt it, is often, eſpecially in a young and beautiful woman, a fortunate defect.

The circumſtances of her birth had ſeldom been touched upon in the family, for it was a topic which could not but be painful to her: but if ever any thing relating to it had been accidentally introduced, when Mrs. Willoughby was converſing with her three children, (as ſhe often termed Willoughby, Matilda, and Celeſtina,) Willoughby would ſay laughingly that it was impoſſible ſhe could be born of French parents: his mother had been ſometimes half angry at this aſſertion, in which however he uſually perſiſted, aſſerting, with prejudice that ſhe declared to be entirely

entirely Engliſh, that no native of the South of France ever had a complexion or a form like her's. After ſhe grew up, though theſe perfections became more eminent, Willoughby never appeared to notice them; with the improvement of her form, her mind kept pace; and as it acquired every day more ſtrength, ſhe gradually became more ſenſible of her obligation to her benefactreſs; but while ſhe indulged her gratitude towards the friend on whom ſhe depended, ſhe felt that ſhe was not born to be dependent.

This elavation of ſpirit now ſupported her; and the conſciouſneſs ſhe was acting right, blunted for a while the poignancy of that pain which ſhe too ſenſibly felt in tearing herſelf from Willoughby. Obliged to act for herſelf, having no breaſt on which ſhe could with propriety lean, her naturally exalted ſoul acquired new firmneſs, before which trifling inconveniences diſappeared; and with an heart occupied by the beloved image of Willoughby, and the ſacrifice ſhe was making for him, ſhe hardly remembered that ſhe had never in her life been in a ſtage coach before, till ſhe found herſelf ſeated in one under the dark gateway of an inn in the city at five o'clock in a dreary winter morning.

Two female paſſengers had already taken their places; one of whom expreſſed great anxiety for a number of hat boxes and caravan trunks which the people belonging to the inn were placing in different parts of the coach, while the lady particularly recommended to their care one box, which ſhe aſſured them contained her new *laylock* bonnet, an article for the ſafety of which ſhe was ſo ſolicitous that ſhe would have taken the great

great machine in which it was contained into the coach, had it not been oppoſed by the coachman, and preſently after by a man who had been drinking with him, and who now preparing to enter the coach, proteſted vehemently againſt this whim of his ſiſter Mary's.—"Who d'ye think will be ſcroughed and crammed up," cried he, "with your confounded trumpery? No, no ſuch thing. Here Daniel, prythee take and ſtow it ſomewhere or another: it ſhall not enter the coach, I'll be ſworn."

The man then placed himſelf by the ſide of the other female paſſenger, oppoſite to Celeſtina, and appeared to be as anxious for his own eaſe as his ſiſter was for the ſafety of her wardrobe. The coach moved on, but it was ſtill quite dark, and ſilence prevailed for the firſt four or five miles, interrupted only by ſome fretful expreſſions from the lady of the bandboxes, at the inconveniences to which people were ſubjected by going in ſtage coaches, and ſome exclamations againſt the unfortunate dampneſs of the morning, which ſhe declared would certainly penetrate the covering and entirely ſpoil her *laylock* bonnet, which ſhe ſaid coſt her three guineas.

"The more fool you," cried her brother, who was of a character Celeſtina had never had an opportunity of ſeeing before, that of a country tradeſman affecting to be a wit and a buck—"the more fool you, ſiſter Mary. What! d'ye think a three guinea bonnet will make you look three years younger? No, no, take my word for it, your flounces, and fringes, and furbelows ſerve for no purpoſe at all but to ſhew your wrinkles."

"Wrinkles,"

"Wrinkles!" repeated the lady diſdainfully, "what do you mean, John Jedwyn? I declare you are ſo rude and diſagreeable I always repent travelling with you. I wiſh you would find out another ſubject."

"Egad," anſwered Jedwyn, "I cannot have a worſe than your wrinkles, that's true enough; and upon my ſoul," added he, looking confidently in the face of Celeſtina and then in that of the other female paſſenger, who, though pale and thin, was very young and very pretty, "here *is* two better ſubjects, one ſide of me and t'other oppoſite: no, no, ſiſter of mine, now day breaks a little, and lets a body ſee how the land lays, you'll hear no more about your wrinkles; for as Hamlet ſays—let me ſee—aye—"here's that metal that's more attractive; hey, Miſs!"

Celeſtina, to whom this hey Miſs was addreſſed, who had till now been very little aware of the ſpecies of rudeneſs and impertinence to which her mode of travelling might ſubject her, was ſhocked and alarmed at this addreſs from a perſon, who, had he ſeen her a few days before, would have approached her with awe and ſpoken to her with diffidence. She remained ſilent however, caſting a look on the man ſufficiently expreſſive of the contempt ſhe felt for him: but he was not of a humour to be eaſily daunted or repulſed, and without ſeeming to underſtand her, began, with purſe-proud pertneſs to relate as if it was a narrative which all the world ſhould be informed of, that he was a grocer and chandler at Exeter, in a very flouriſhing trade, and in partnerſhip with a gentleman who had married one of his ſiſters: "and this *laylock* bonnet lady,"

continued

continued he, " is my eldeſt ſiſter, who has been a *viſiting* this half year and better an old aunt of our's at Camberwell. She is an old maid herſelf, but deviliſh rich, and from a ſort of fellow feeling you know ſhe intends to make our Mary here her heir. The old girl muſt hop the perch ſoon, or all her money won't get her dear niece a huſband its my opinion, unleſs may be an Iriſhman or a ſtrolling player."

This ſecond attack on herſelf, and his viſible admiration of Celeſtina's beauty, completed the ill humour of his ſiſter, who with a look where anger and ſcorn contended for pre-eminence, remained ſilently ſwelling, while the facetious trader again addreſſed himſelf to Celeſtina.

" What do you never make talking? Come, ſince now you have a hiſtory of me, lets hear a little who you are, and where you are bound to?"

" Sir," replied Celeſtina, " it is impoſſible that either can be of any conſequence to you."

" How are you ſure of that?" cried Mr. Jedwyn with a loud laugh: " now I think nothing is more likely than that we may be better acquainted. 'Tis nothing now I believe for a young man of ſpirit, as well in the world as I am, to take a fancy to a pretty woman."

" A fancy!" exclaimed Miſs Mary Jedwyn, with great acrimony—" a fancy! Jack Jedwyn I am amazed at you!"

" And why amazed, my ancient ſpinſter?" retorted he. " What the devil! I'm my own maſter I hope. To be ſure you are ſome fifteen or twenty years older than me. But what of that? —So much the worſe for you. I hope I an't to be

be governed by a duenna. What a plague, mayn't I talk to a handſome girl I wonder without your putting in your ſquinnygut opinion ?"

" If you intend to inſult me," anſwered the lady, trying to hide under the appearance of calm contempt her great diſpoſition to cry :—" if you intend to inſult me, I am ſure I heartily wiſh I had got the better of my fears and travelled alone in a poſt *chai;* for no rudeneſs as I might have met on the road could be worſe than your's."

" That's your gratitude now, cried Jedwyn, for my coming up clear from Exeter to fetch you at a time when I had no buſineſs in London nor ſhould a had for theſe ſix weeks: that's your thanks for my kindneſs, and for liſtening to your nonſenſical fears and frights. Rude to you! oh Lord! as if any mortal man who has eyes would ever look at you twice. No Mary! make yourſelf eaſy; that weazen, winterly viſage of your's, is ſafeguard enough if you were to travel from here to Jericho."

He then began to mimic his ſiſter, and enlarge on the terrors to which ſhe was, he ſaid, perpetually ſubject, leſt ſome ſad daring rake of a man ſhould carry her away: and had he been leſs groſs and diſguſting, Celeſtina would hardly have forborne a ſmile at ſome part of the ludicrous repreſentation he gave of this apprehenſive delicacy and trembling nicety, for which ſhe could not, in the perſonal attractions of Miſs Jedwyn, find any reaſonable grounds; for ſhe was very tall, very thin, and very yellow: her long, ſcraggy neck, appeared hardly adequate to the ſupport of a head, where art had ſo redundantly

dundantly been called in aid of nature, that it ſeemed to abound in ſhining black hair, nicely curled, without powder, which was ſuffered to wanton over her forehead and flow down her back, while a little white beaver hat, perched on one ſide, was meant to give to her countenance that bewitching archneſs which ſhe had obſerved that mode of head dreſs to beſtow on the young and lovely.

Mr. Jedwyn having exhauſted all his immediate ſtock of wit on his ſiſter, now left her to digeſt the indignation he had raiſed, and applied himſelf again to Celeſtina. Having no idea that any thing but money beſtowed conſequence, and having lived the greater part of his time among thoſe who had leſs of it than himſelf, he had never been accuſtomed to allow of any ſuperiority, nor could he comprehend how a young woman ſo humbly ſituated in life, as to travel in a ſtage coach, could help being charmed into liking by his wit, and awed into complaiſance by his importance.

On ſuch a man the native dignity of Celeſtina failed totally of its uſual effect. He became more and more troubleſome; for he was piqued but not repreſſed by the coldneſs and even contempt of her manner. He told her, among much other impertinence, that all her ſhyneſs ſhould not hinder him from finding out who ſhe was; and then with yet more offenſive familiarity addreſſed himſelf to the other young woman, who he thought belonged to her, and who heard his converſation with terror and diſlike as great as that of Celeſtina.

His

His behaviour at length becoming inſupportably uneaſy to her, Celeſtina, when the coach reached the village where they were to breakfaſt, determined not to ſubject herſelf to it any longer; ſhe therefore ordered her tea to be carried into another room, and a poſt chaiſe to be ready as ſoon as ſhe had drank it.

As ſhe ſat at her breakfaſt, ſhe ſaw the young woman, whoſe countenance had greatly intereſted her, walk by the window ſlowly and dejectedly, one hand held to her forehead, and an handkerchief in the other. Ever ready to aſſiſt the unhappy, the generous heart of Celeſtina was touched with compaſſion towards this forlorn ſtranger. "She is as young as I am," ſaid ſhe, "and perhaps even more unfortunate. Why ſhould I not take her with *me*, if ſhe is, as I ſuppoſe, travelling the ſame road? why ſhould I leave her expoſed to the inſults of that odious man, which, humble as her fortune ſeems to be, ſhe ill knows how to bear. I may at leaſt, though I cannot otherwiſe aſſiſt her, ſave her from paſſing the remainder of the journey improperly and unpleaſantly." Celeſtina then rang the bell, and directing her fellow traveller to be called, deſired her not only to partake of her breakfaſt, but to accompany her the reſt of the way in a poſt chaiſe which ſhe had ordered, to eſcape from Mr. Jedwyn.

The young perſon, notwithſtanding the kindneſs of Celeſtina's addreſs, ſtill continued ſtanding, and with a faint bluſh ſaid, "You are very good Madam;—but—though we happen to be in the ſame coach I am ſure I ought not to put myſelf on a footing with you: I am only a ſervant, travelling

velling into the country to my friends to recover my health, and it would be very wrong in me to intrude on a lady like you."

Celeſtina, won by this humble ſimplicity, ſoon reaſſured her new acquaintance, and ſoon after Jeſſy Woodburn, (which was her name,) followed Celeſtina to the chaiſe; where having paid the coach in London, ſhe now had directed her box to be placed.

Mr. Jedwyn left the hot rolls and chocolate with which he was regaling himſelf, to remonſtrate at the chaiſe door againſt this ſeceſſion.

Celeſtina, without giving him an anſwer, drew up the glaſſes the moment ſhe was ſeated, which gave Jedwyn an opportunity to ſay to the poſtilion, who was not yet on horſeback, that if he would in the courſe of a fortnight find out who the lady was, and whither ſhe went, he would make up the half crown he then gave him half a guinea. The boy readily promiſed to execute to the beſt of his power ſo lucrative a commiſſion; and Celeſtina and her companion were ſoon at a diſtance, and proceeded on their journey much pleaſed with the exchange they had made of a conveyance.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IX.

CELESTINA having by her eaſy and gentle manners conquered part of the extreme diffidence of her companion, began to queſtion her about her ſituation in life; and as ſhe had one of thoſe faces and one of thoſe voices which win every heart where any ſpark of feeling is found, Jeſſy ſoon found herſelf enough at eaſe, and even flattered by the intereſt ſhe ſeemed to take in her fate, as to acquire courage to relate the following narrative.

"I muſt go back a great way, Madam, ſince you command me to tell you all I know of myſelf; even as far as my grandfather, who is ſtill living, and who is one one of the richeſt farmers in our part of Devonſhire uſing his own land, as all his family I have heard have done before him for a great many years. He married a clergyman's daughter who had been educated very well, greatly indeed above the ſort of life ſhe was to lead as a farmer's wife. But ſhe was very pretty. Her father left her unprovided for, and ſo ſhe

ſhe married perhaps more for money than love. My mother was the only child they ever had, and my grandmother, though her own education had only ſerved to make her unhappy, would fain have had her daughter brought up as ſhe had been herſelf; but her huſband, of a very hard and obſtinate temper, and repenting perhaps of having married a wife too fine for him, was ſo far from allowing her to have any education, that he went to the other extreme; inſiſting that his girl ſhould do as his mother did thirty or forty years before, and not only be taught to underſtand all the buſineſs of the farm, but to live as he did himſelf, and as he obliged his wife to do, the ſame as the farming men.

The conſequence of this difference of opinion was fatal to my poor mother: one of her parents took every opportunity of giving her notions above herſelf, which very naturally, ſhe eaſily took; and the other ſeemed to delight in humbling and degrading her: when ſhe was about eighteen ſhe loſt her mother, and then was forced to ſubmit to the harſh and unneceſſary confinement impoſed upon her by her father, from whom ſhe endeavoured to conceal her paſſion for reading, which only gained ſtrength by this unreaſonable reſtraint. Home was very uneaſy to her, but ſhe could hardly ever leave it but by ſtealth. As ſhe was likely to have a very good fortune, ſhe had numberleſs ſuitors; but my grandfather would ſuffer none of them to ſee her; deſigning to marry her to a relation of his own almoſt as old as himſelf, to whom ſhe had an invincible averſion, which through the timidity of her nature ſhe dared not declare.

A neighbour

A neighbouring farmer, with whom my grandfather had for many years been at variance, and with whom he had had two or three ſons, both brought up to his own buſineſs; the eldeſt was married and had a family, but the other had been ſpoiled by his mother, and the notice taken of him by the neighbouring gentlemen on account of his ſkill in field ſports; he had indeed always been rather fonder of being with them at cricket-matches, and races, than minding his farm. He found means to introduce himſelf to my mother, though he had been poſitively refuſed by my grandfather: he won her affections, and after ſeveral private meetings ſhe agreed to go off with him: the conſequence of which was her having the door of her paternal houſe ſhut againſt her for ever.

For a little time after this marriage my mother was received at the houſe of her father-in-law, but on his death it became the right of the eldeſt ſon, who had a number of children; and as my father's family were all irritated and diſappointed by the obſtinate reſentment of my grandfather towards his daughter, they ſoon behaved with ſuch unkindneſs towards her, that ſhe prevailed on my father to quit them, and take a little farm of his own, which he with difficulty borrowed money enough to ſtock, for he had long ſince paid away in diſcharge of old debts, all the money left him by his father. He had been ſo long uſed to an idle, or rather a gay life, that he could not now accuſtom himſelf to the labour requiſite on ſo ſmall a farm. My mother however by inceſſant attention remedied for ſome years

years this deficiency on his part; and though nothing was laid by, they contrived to live; my mother making from time to time attempts to obtain her father's pardon, though ſhe received nothing but cruel and poſitive refuſals, either to ſee her or her children, or ever to give them the leaſt aſſiſtance.

"This hardneſs of heart, which ſhould have excited pity, only made my father treat my poor mother with harſhneſs too. A young man of fortune in the neighbourhood juſt then coming of age, was often at his ſeat near our little farm, and took ſuch a fancy to my father that he was always at his houſe, living as he lived, and aſſociating with gentlemen from London, and women they brought down with them. He never came home but in ſuch a terrible humour, that I and my ſiſter, who were then about ten and nine years old, uſed to be terrified to death; yet when he was gone, as he ſometimes was for weeks together, my mother lamented his abſence and the loſs of his affection, much more than the fatigue, poverty, and ſorrow, to which his conduct expoſed us all.

"Preſent anxiety and the fear of leaving me and my ſiſter to a fate as deplorable as her own, together with the inceſſant toil attending the care of a farm wholly neglected by her huſband, gradually deſtroyed her conſtitution, till at laſt, Madam, her heart was quite broken. When ſhe found ſhe had only a few hours to live, ſhe entreated the clergyman of the pariſh to go to her father, and beg, if he would not ſee her, that he would only ſend her his forgiveneſs, for ſhe could not die in peace without it."

"Even

"Even that he had the cruelty to refuſe! I loſt my dear mother, Madam; and my ſiſter, who was always of a weak conſtitution, followed her ſoon afterwards to the grave. Ah! how often have I wiſhed that I had died too. Troubles now multiplied around us: my father's great friend had by this time ſo completely ruined himſelf, that every thing was ſeized, and he left the country. My father having no longer a houſe to be at, was forced to live at home; but it was only for a little while; for during my mother's illneſs every thing had been neglected, and we could not pay our rent; ſo the landlord ſeized, our cattle were ſold, and we were turned out of the farm, and went to a miſerable cottage in the next village; where, as my father was ſo unuſed to work, we ſubſiſted for a while on the reluctant charity of my uncle, whoſe daughters were always reproaching me with taking their bread from them. Believe me, Madam, I did all I could do to earn it for my father and myſelf: but what could hands ſo feeble as mine do towards ſupporting us both. I made an attempt to ſee my grandfather, and to implore his pity and protection towards one who had never offended him; but he ordered me to be driven from his door, and never again ſuffered to appear there: orders which thoſe he had about him were ready enough to execute. I returned home quite diſheartened indeed, but ſtill endeavouring to the utmoſt of my power to procure a ſupport by my labour for my father and myſelf; I even went out to work in the fields; but all I could earn was ſo inſufficient that we often wanted neceſſary food,

food, as leaſt *I* have often wanted it. But my father had made an acquaintance with a widow woman in the next village, who was ſaid to be worth forty or fifty pounds. She was young too and not ugly, and in leſs than a year after my dear mother's death, he married her, and we removed to her houſe.

"The extremes of poverty I had before known, bitter as I thought them, were comparatively happineſs to what I now endured. I became the ſervant of my mother in law, only without wages. She ſoon brought my father an increaſe of family: to them then I was nurſe, and very ſoon had neither ſleep by night or reſpite by day. I thought it my duty to bear every thing for my father, without murmuring, but as my fatigue and ſufferings encreaſed, my dejection encreaſed too, and I was ſometimes through mere deſpondence unable to fulfil my heavy taſks, in which if I failed in the ſlighteſt degree, I was inſulted with opprobrious language, and told to go to my rich grandfather.

"Alas! my rich grandfather continued inexorable; but home was ſo dreadful that I determined to go to ſervice, being near twenty, and able I thought to undertake any place that could be offered me; for a harder than that I now filled, it was impoſſible to meet with.

"I applied to a relation I had at Exeter, who after ſome enquiries procured me a place in the family of an attorney in London, who was willing to diſpenſe with my want of experience in favour of my being a country ſervant. Thither therefore I went, and entered as cheerfully as I could on

on a new mode of life; endeavouring to forget that I ever had any expectations of a better. The dark, damp places where the ſervants of perſons in the middling ranks of life, live in the city, appeared very dreadful to me; and it was my buſineſs, after a day of fatiguing work, to ſit up for my maſter or the clerks, who were often out very late. My miſtreſs too was a very fine lady, and kept a great deal of company, and it was part of my employment to wait on her own maid, who was alſo a ſort of houſe-keeper, and much more difficult to be pleaſed than the lady herſelf: ſhe took care indeed that I ſhould never want buſineſs; but determined as I was never again to be a burden to my father, I went through the duties of my place, heavy as they were, with courage and ſteadineſs; ſo that even this ſecond miſtreſs, however unwilling to be pleaſed, could not find fault with me.

"Among a great number of clerks that my maſter kept, there was one who was employed merely to copy, and was not admitted among the reſt, though he looked I am ſure more like a gentleman than any of them. He did not lodge in the houſe, but came every morning early to his work, and ſat at it, poor young man! till five or ſix o'clock at night, when he dined with us ſervants, after the family and other clerks had done. Often indeed, inſtead of eating, he would ſigh all dinner time as if his heart would break; and I could not help fancying that he had been uſed to live quite in other company; though he never ſeemed above ours, but was always very obliging, though he was always very melancholy.

" It happened once, that my maſter had ſome extraordinary buſineſs to do that required great haſte; it was ſome papers that were to be ſent to India; and Mr. Cathcart, the young man I have been ſpeaking of, hearing my maſter ſay how afraid he was he ſhould not get ready, offered to work all day on Sunday, when none of the reſt of the clerks would have ſtaid from their pleaſure on any account. My maſter was pleaſed with his willingneſs to oblige, and he ſat down to his taſk. Nobody was in the houſe but him and me; for it was the cuſtom of my maſter and miſtreſs to dine in the country on a Sunday with my miſtreſs's mother at Edmonton; and all the gentlemen in the office went different ways. The footman attended my miſtreſs; and Mrs. Gillam, her maid, always went to ſee her acquaintance, who lived at the other end of the town, and very often came home ſadly out of temper becauſe her place was not ſo fine and ſo faſhionable as their's; and then I was ſure to ſuffer for it, as indeed I did for all her ill temper when ſhe had nobody elſe to vent it upon.

" Ah! Madam! often of a Sunday in the ſummer I have gone up into our dining-room, becauſe the ſtreet was cloſe and narrow, that below we hardly ſaw day-light from one end of the year to the other; and I have opened the ſaſh, and looked againſt the black walls and ſhut windows of the houſes oppoſite, and have thought how diſmal it was! Ah! I remembered too well the beautiful green hills, the meadows and woods, where I ſo often uſed to ramble with my ſiſter when we were children, in our own country, before

fore we were old enough to know that my poor mother was unhappy, and had learned to weep with her! How often have I wiſhed thoſe days would come again, and how often have I ſhut my eyes, and tried to fancy I ſaw once more all the dear objects that then were ſo charming. Alas! the dream would not laſt long! or if it did, it ſerved only to make me feel more unhappy, when inſtead of being able to indulge it, I was obliged to go back to hard, and what was yet worſe, to dirty work in our diſmal kitchen. In Devonſhire I had been uſed to work hard enough; but I had always freſh air to breathe, and could now and then of an evening ſit at our cottage window, and look at the moon, and fancy that my mother might be there with my ſiſter, and that they ſaw and pitied their poor unfortunate Jeſſy. Tears then relieved me; and I gathered courage to bear the next day the ill humour of my mother-in-law, which now that it was over, I fancied was not worſe than the ill humour of Mrs. Gillam. My father's harſhneſs indeed was worſe than either, becauſe I loved him, and every time he uſed to ſpeak cruelly to me, and ſeem to wiſh me away, it was like a dagger in my heart!"

The tears of the unfortunate Jeſſy here interrupted her narrative a moment, and Celeſtina took occaſion to ſay——

"But what were you going to tell me about Mr. Cathcart! You ſeem to have forgotten him?"

"Ah! Madam!" replied ſhe with a deep ſigh, "I thought after I began to talk of him, that

that I was doing wrong, and that it was better not to ſay any more about him: beſides, Madam, though you are ſo good and ſo condeſcending, it is not perhaps proper for me to trouble you with all the reaſons I have to be ſorrowful."

"Indeed I wiſh extremely to know them," replied Celeſtina; "and particularly I deſire to know all that relates to Mr. Cathcart. The little you have ſaid, has intereſted me greatly."

"It was on the Sunday, Madam, that I was ſpeaking of, when every body was gone out, that poor Mr. Cathcart firſt ſpoke to me alone. Often before that to be ſure I thought he pitied me, when he ſaw me doing work too heavy for my ſtrength; and often he has offered to help me, and did not diſdain to aſſiſt me though the footmen did; and yet I am ſure his look and his manners were a great deal more like thoſe of a nobleman than any thing elſe. Mrs. Gillam however was always ſo angry if ſhe ſaw him ſpeak to, or help me, and uſed to put herſelf into ſuch paſſions, that he was afraid almoſt of looking at me before her, leaſt it ſhould be the occaſion of my being uſed ill.

"On the Sunday, Madam, that I was ſpeaking of, he had finiſhed all my maſter had left for him to do, between ſix and ſeven o'clock for he wrote ſuch a beautiful hand and ſo quick that his writing ſeemed done by enchantment. That day he had eat no dinner: but a little after ſix o'clock he came down into the kitchen, where I was ſitting: 'Jeffy, ſaid he, 'will you make 'me ſome tea: I am fatigued, and I think

'w

'will refreſh me.' Ah! Madam! how pleaſed I was to do any thing for him. As he ſat on the other ſide of the table drinking his tea, I looked at him, and thought his eyes ſeemed inflamed as if he had been crying, and he ſeemed more melancholy than uſual. 'What is the matter, 'Mr. Cathcart?' ſaid I, 'you have tired your-'ſelf too much?'

"Yes, anſwered he, 'I have been writing a 'long time; but I have finiſhed my buſineſs, ſo 'I never mind my head-ach.' He ſeemed deſirous of turning the diſcourſe, and reaching acroſs to the ſide of the table where I ſat, he took up a torn book, which, while I was ſweeping the clerk's office the day before, my maſter had thrown to me, bidding me burn it, for that he would not have ſuch trumpery lay about there. I never had time to read, though my poor mother had taught me to love it; and I had thrown this book into a drawer, from whence I had taken it but a moment before Mr. Cathcart came down,

"He enquired how I came by it, and when I told him, aſked if I had read it? I anſwered that I had no time. 'It is my book,' ſaid he, ſighing from the bottom of his heart as he ſpoke; 'and it is the ſtory of a poor young man, who 'was as unfortunate as I am: but he had the 'reſolution to end his calamities; he indeed was 'not enchained to life as I muſt be. Heaven 'and earth!' exclaimed he, as if at that moment oppreſſed by ſome idea altogether inſupportable, 'how long ſhall I remain the wretch 'I am!'

'He

'He ſtarted from his chair, and walked about the room with looks ſo wild that I was terrified to death: I went to him trembling, and beſought him to be calm, to tell me if I could do any thing for him: he looked eagerly at me a moment and burſt into tears——'Ah! Jeſſy,' cried he, 'you pity me, and all the return I 'make, is to terrify and diſtreſs you!' For a moment Madam, after this guſt of paſſion, he became calmer, and ſat down; then as I ſtood ſtill trembling by him, he took my hands within his, and put them to his burning forehead and eyes; but after a moment ſeeming to recollect himſelf, he ſighed, let them go, and ſaid——'I 'hardly know, Jeſſy, what ailed me juſt now; 'but I was ſo tired, my ſpirits were ſo exhauſted, by having been ſo long at the deſk em'ployed in ſuch tedious kind of writing, that 'when I looked at you——when you ſeemed 'concerned for me—I am ſo little uſed to meet 'any friendly looks here, that your pity affected 'me ſtrangely; I felt juſt then how terrible, 'how very terrible my fate was; and this 'proud rebellious heart, unſubdued yet to my 'cruel deſtiny, deprived me for a moment of 'my reaſon.'

'Thank God, replied I, you are now eaſier: indeed you did ſadly frighten me. Tell me, dear Mr. Cathcart, why did you talk ſo, and why are you ſo unhappy?

'I will tell you, Jeſſy,' anſwered he, 'though 'you are the only perſon in the houſe who ever 'ſhall gueſs at my real ſituation. I am unhappy: '——not becauſe I was born and educated a

'gentleman

'gentleman, and am now reduced to a condi-
'tion worſe than abſolute ſervitude, but becauſe
'thoſe I love and feel for more than for myſelf
'are fallen with me; becauſe my labour——
'and yet I am ſacrificing my life to follow it—
'my labour is inſufficient to ſupport a woman,
'delicately brought up, and her four infant
'children!'

'Ah! Madam! all the ſorrow I had ever known was nothing to the cold death-like feeling which ſeemed to wither up my heart, when for the moment I thought Mr. Cathcart was married and had a family! I did not know at that time why it hurt me ſo: but I was not able to ſpeak, while he, after remaining ſilent a minute, ſaid ——'By my work to-day, I have earned a gui-
'nea more than my weekly ſtipend: ſurely
'therefore inſtead of murmuring thus, I ought
'rather to be thankful that I have had power
'to do this, for to-morrow I ſhall receive it, and
'to-morrow I ſhall be able to carry to my Sophy
'and her children ſome neceſſaries which they
'have long wanted, but which I could not be-
'fore ſpare money enough to procure for them,
'out of what I earned weekly as the only ſup-
'port of us all.'

'Poor as I am, Madam, I could not help unlocking my tea-cheſt where I kept my little ſavings; and though I trembled like a leaf as I did it, I put a guinea and ſome ſilver, all I had, into a paper, and carried it to him. Mr. Cathcart, ſaid I, pray be not offended, but take this trifle, and make uſe of it for your family; they want it more than I do, and you cannot think how

how much happier it will make me if you have it, than if I lay it out on myſelf.

" Gracious God !' cried he, ' this is too much. ' No, my dear, generous girl, do not imagine I ' will take what you have ſo hardly acquired. ' Believe me, Jeſſy, this inſtance of ſenſibility ' and kindneſs, charming as they are, only ren- ' der me more wretched. In the meaneſt ſer- ' vitude, in the loweſt degradation, amid the ' hardeſt labour, I have found a ſoul ſo much ' ſuperior to thoſe I have met with in poliſhed ' ſociety : but your form, your manners, your ' ſentiments, are not thoſe of your ſtation: ' ſurely you were not born what I now ſee ' you ?'

" Indeed, replied I, I was : my father is now a labourer ; I have no mother ; nor any friend willing, if they are able, to do any thing for me : but while I am able to work I muſt not, I will not be diſcontented, whatever hardſhips I may undergo, if you Mr. Cathcart will but let me be your friend. Let me ſee your children ; indeed I ſhall love them ; and if your lady will give me leave I will work for them : I can bring any thing ſhe will give me to do home, and work in my own room inſtead of going to bed.

" I do not know Madam, how I was able to ſay ſo much, for I felt my heart throb as if it would break all the time I was ſpeaking. Oh ! Madam ! I was ſuddenly tranſported as it were to heaven, when Mr. Cathcart, thanking me a thouſand times for my offer, told me that the children he ſupported were not his own but his ſiſter's,

ſiſter's, whoſe huſband had been undone by the villainy of ſome people with whom he had been connected in trade, and by the wickedneſs of an attorney; it is impoſſible to deſcribe how I was relieved to find he was not married! for though I am ſure I ſhould have loved his children dearly becauſe they were his, yet methought I loved them much better now.'

Senſations ſhe had herſelf felt in regard to Willoughby, now forcibly occurred to Celeſtina: ſhe remained ſilent however, and Jeffy went on.

'After this time, Madam, Mr. Cathcart took every opportunity of ſpeaking to me; and I got leave to go out one evening, and he took me to ſee this beloved and unfortunate ſiſter. It was in one of thoſe little new houſes which are run up in a road leading from Iſlington to London, that Mr. Cathcart's family lodged: his ſiſter, Madam, was ſo like him, that the moment I ſaw her I could have died for her; and I forgot all the reluctance with which I agreed at his earneſt requeſt to go to ſee her: ſhe ſeemed to be four or five years older than he is, and was very pale and thin, but ſhe had ſuch beautiful eyes, and hands ſo white!——her form was ſo graceful, ſo commanding, that her very plain dreſs, and a cloſe cap, ſuch as widow's wear, could not diſfigure her, or make her look otherwiſe than like a gentlewoman. When her brother led me in, ſhe held out her hand to me, and begged I would ſit down: though in

ſuch a poor little lodging, I felt that ſhe was ſo much my ſuperior that I could not obey her without heſitation; but ſhe preſently by her gracious manners diſſipated my fears, and I ſat down by her cloſe to a frame on which ſhe had been working. A cradle, with a ſleeping baby in it, ſtood at her feet, by which a little girl of three years old ſat, as if watching the infant, and on haſſocks near the window were placed two little boys, the elder not above ſix years old, who were learning their taſks. As ſoon as my reception was over, ſhe ſmiled on her brother with more cheerfulneſs than it ſeemed poſſible a moment before for her countenance to aſſume; and deſired he would aſſiſt her in getting ſome tea for me. Cathcart went down ſtairs, and then ſhe entered into converſation with me: 'My brother,' ſaid ſhe, 'has often told me how 'unfit you are for the condition in which he 'found you, and if I may judge by your appear-'ance, you certainly were not born to it. Had 'my dear Frank been any other than he is, I 'ſhould have ſuppoſed him influenced by beau-'ty; but I know that mere perſonal lovelineſs 'in any rank never affected him, and many 'reaſons induced me, Jeſſy, to conſent to ſee 'you——reaſons which relate to him as well as 'yourſelf. He has told you, Jeſſy, that he was 'born to proſpects very different from thoſe 'now before him—proſpects which are I fear 'vaniſhed for ever. My misfortunes, which are 'ſuch as I dare not attempt to relate to you, 'have extended to him: yet does he with un-'exampled generoſity, give himſelf up to ſervi-

tude,

'tude, to aſſiſt me and my poor children. Judge 'whether ſuch a brother is not dear to me—— 'judge whether I ought not to love all that he 'loves, and to comply as far as poſſible with all 'his wiſhes.

'I have of late ſeen with infinite pain, that 'in addition to all the calamities of indigence, 'a paſſion has ſeized him, which muſt en-'creaſe, and may perpetuate, his misfortunes, 'and I conſented, and even wiſhed to ſee 'you, that I might fairly ſtate to you the ſi-'tuation he is in, as to circumſtances; in the 'hope———a hope in which I truſt I ſhall not 'be deceived, that your good ſenſe, and 'even your regard for him, will lead you 'to avoid an error ſo ſeducing as that of be-'coming his wife.'

"I do not know Madam, how I looked at that moment, but I believe Mrs. Elphinſtone thought I ſhould faint, for ſhe gave me immediate aſſiſtance by opening the window, fetched me a glaſs of water, and very earneſtly entreated me to try to recover myſelf before her brother returned. I ſhould be too tedious, Madam, were I to relate all that paſſed even in the few minutes we were together afterwards. I found that Cathcart's regard for me was ſuch, that he was willing to forget what he had once been, and what he might ſtill be, and to unite himſelf for ever with the poor and humble Jeſſy. Ah! Madam, had it not been for Mrs. Elphinſtone's ſake, who with her children had no other dependence, I ſhould have feared no poverty, no diſtreſs with him; but ſhould have been too

happy

happy to have begged round the world with him: as it was, I ſaw that I ought not to think a moment of a marriage, which would at beſt only encreaſe his difficulties. Oh! how I then wiſhed that my grandfather were leſs cruel, my poor father leſs imprudent!

"After this firſt interview with Mrs. Elphinſtone, I ſaw her whenever I could get leave to go out, which was not indeed very often: but my maſter, who did not want humanity, ſeeing me look dreadfully ill, ordered Mrs. Gillam to let me go out whenever ſhe could ſpare me, for air. Mrs. Elphinſtone, who watched every alteration of my countenance, gueſſed at all I ſuffered; and at length ſhe became ſo fond of me, that ſhe rather deſired than oppoſed the completion of her brother's wiſhes. The ſtruggle I underwent nearly coſt me my life: but at length, Madam, I have left them both. I could not bear to ſee my dear Cathcart every day more and more unhappy: I could not bear to become a burden to him: for ſome time I redoubled my diligence, and exerted myſelf greatly beyond my ſtrength, from a hope, that by becoming neceſſary to my miſtreſs, I ſhould obtain an encreaſe of wages, out of which I thought it poſſible that I might be able to ſave ſomething; but the upper ſervant took pains to render all my endeavours ineffectual; and my health declined ſo rapidly under the labour and anxiety I endured, that Cathcart, whoſe uneaſineſs completed the meaſure of my ſufferings, at length propoſed that I ſhould quit my ſervice, as the only means of ſaving my life, and try what my native air would do to reſtore me."

"I hope

"I hope my father will receive me without unkindneſs, and ſuffer me to ſtay till I am able to take another ſervice; and ſometimes I am willing to flatter myſelf that my grandfather may relent, though it is more poſſible than probable."

"And where," enquired Celeſtina, have you "left your lover?"

"Ah! Madam," replied the weeping Jeſſy, "he ſtill remains writing for the exiſtence of his ſiſter and her children: at his pen from early morning, to eleven or twelve at night. By ſuch aſſiduous application he is enabled indeed to earn double the money he would otherwiſe do; but his dear health is faſt declining, and God only knows," continued ſhe, claſping her hands together, "whether I ſhall ever ſee him more: but if not, one comfort, one great comfort is, that we ſhall not be ſeparated long:—in heaven nothing can part us!'

"Let us however hope,' ſaid Celeſtina, 'that your tenderneſs, your fortitude, and generoſity, will be rewarded on earth. Your father then knows nothing of your arrival?'

"Ah! no, Madam: I dared not write to him, for fear he ſhould have been angry with me for having quitted my ſervice, and have refuſed to receive me. Now I hope, when he ſees me ſo ſadly altered, for I am not at all like what I was when I left him, he will have ſome pity upon me, and ſuffer me at leaſt to ſtay in his houſe till I have ſtrength enough to undertake another ſervice.'

'You

'You ſhall go with me, however, to-night,' ſaid Celeſtina, 'and you ſhall ſtay with me till you are fitter than you now appear to be to undergo an interview with this cruel father.'

The poor Jeſſy, oppreſſed by this goodneſs, could not ſpeak, but ſhe kiſſed the hand of her benefactreſs with a reſpectful gratitude, and a mournful but not unpleaſing ſadneſs kept the generous and ſoft-hearted Celeſtina ſilent till their arrival at the inn where they were to remain that night.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER X.

EARLY in the evening of the following day, Celeſtina and her humble friend arrived at the lodging ſhe had taken: it was a ſmall new built brick houſe, on the edge of an extenſive common: encloſures at a diſtance relieved a little the the dreary uniformity of the view from its windows, and a village church, with a few ſtraggling houſes ſcattered round the edge of the heath at the diſtance of about half a mile, gave ſome relief to the eye, and ſome intimation of an inhabited country: winter had alike diveſted the common of its furze and heath bloſſoms, and the few elms on its borders, of their foliage. All was alike dull, and unpleaſant: but Celeſtina remembered that ſhe had now eſcaped from the Caſtlenorths, from the ſight of preparations for Willoughby's marriage, and that if ſhe was not to live to ſee him happy ſhe ſhould not now witneſs his ſtruggles and his diſtreſs: ſhe tried to believe

believe that ſhe could receive intelligence of his marriage with compoſure, and be glad in the reflection that he had obeyed his mother; but her heart revolted, and all ſhe could promiſe herſelf was, to exert her reſolution to obtain ſuch a ſtate of mind, as might enable her to hear, without very acute anguiſh, of an event, which, notwithſtanding all that had paſſed at her laſt interview with Willoughby, ſhe ſtill conſidered as inevitable.

The firſt day after her arrival was paſſed in ſettling herſelf in her new habitation by the aid of Jeſſy, who helped her to arrange her books and her wardrobe. The penſive ſimplicity of her new friend's character won upon her every hour; and now, deprived as ſhe was of all her former connections, and of every proſpect of happineſs for herſelf, ſhe was ſenſible of no other pleaſure than what aroſe from the power of ſoothing the ſorrows of her unfortunate companion, and forming ſchemes for reſtoring her to the favour of her grandfather; and to her unhappy lover, in whoſe fate ſhe became as much intereſted from the artleſs deſcription Jeſſy had given, as if ſhe had herſelf known him. It was neceſſary however to part with her: but as ſhe appeared in too weak a ſtate of health to encounter the rude reception ſhe might meet with from her father and her mother in law, if ſhe appeared before them without notice, Celeſtina thought it beſt to keep her till an anſwer could be obtained from them, and ſhe therefore hired a meſſenger, by whom the letter the trembling Jeſſy indited was diſpatched to the cottage of Woodburn, which was about ſeven miles diſtant. Towards evening he return-

ed,

ed, and brought a reluctant and surly consent from her father to receive her for a little time till she recovered her health. The terms in which this answer was written, though Celestina endeavoured to give them the best interpretation she could, were cruelly painful to poor Jessy, who wept over the letter, while Celestina, with the most generous pity, assured her, that if her father's behaviour to her was unkind, and her stay at his house uncomfortable, she would again receive her, and that she should be welcome to remain with her till her health was re-established, and till means could be found to procure for her the favour of her grandfather, who, on enquiry of her hostess, Celestina found to be as Jessy had represented him—a very rich farmer, now quite superannuated, and almost childish; who having once determined to resent his daughter's marriage, had persisted in it from the hard obstinacy of his nature, and had been supported in it by the arts of an old female relation who lived with him, and who, while she made a purse every year out of what was entrusted to her, looked forward with avidity to his death, when she hoped to possess the whole. Celestina procured an horse and a man to lead it, the expence of which she paid herself, and on the third day after their arrival at Thorpe Heath, Jessy took leave of her lovely and generous benefactress, who was now left to reflect, without interruption, on her own destiny.

Till lately she had not been conscious of the force of her attachment to Willoughby; for it began so early in life, that she had never been alarmed by the uneasiness which seizes the heart

on

on its firſt reception of a new paſſion: ſhe now however found that her exiſtence had been delightful to her, only as his idea had mingled itſelf with every hour of it, and that now, when ſhe believed ſhe ought no longer to indulge herſelf in thinking of him, ſhe could think of nothing elſe with either intereſt or pleaſure: the benovolence and tenderneſs of heart ſtill afforded her ſome ſatisfaction, while ſhe could exert it in favour of the unfortunate, and the power of befriending the deſolate and unhappy Jeſſy had called off her attention a little from her own uneaſy feelings; but now, having done all ſhe could at preſent do for her, her heart was again ſenſible of the cruel deprivation to which ſhe was condemned, and her mind occupied in reflecting on what Willoughby would think, what he would ſay, when he learned ſhe was gone; in conjectures on his behaviour to the Caſtlenorths, and in trembling ſolicitude whether he would write to her, or without any farther indulgence of an attachment, which he knew he ought not to cheriſh, drive her from his recollection, at leaſt till he had obeyed the injunctions of his mother, and by completing the marriage ſhe had inſiſted upon, put it out of his power to think of Celeſtina otherwiſe than as his ſiſter.

Two or three days paſſed thus, before Celeſtina could acquire in any degree her uſual ſerenity, and ſit down to her books, her drawing, or her work. By muſic, which ſhe now fancied would ſooth and calm her ſpirits, ſhe could not amuſe herſelf; for though ſhe had a piano forte which uſed to be called her's, yet, as it had never been formally given to her, and as Mrs. Molyneux had

had not mentioned it, Celeſtina would not take it on her quitting London. At length the firſt uneaſy ſenſations on her change of ſituation a little ſubſided, and ſhe began to conſider of a letter which ſhe thought it indiſpenſably neceſſary to write to Mrs. Molyneux.

In the mean time the ardent and eager temper of Willoughby exhibited in London a ſcene, which, could Celeſtina have known, it would have redoubled all her anxiety. The dinner of which he had been with difficulty induced to partake at Lord Caſtlenorth's, had ſerved only to fill him with new and invincible diſguſt towards the whole family, and hardly could he command himſelf ſo as not to betray it. The reſtraint, however, which, in conſideration of their relationſhip to his mother, he determined, whatever it coſt him, to put upon his ſentiments, gave to two of the perſons concerned a favourable impreſſion of him: Lord Caſtlenorth, fond of form, and of that reſerve which he fancied ſupported dignity, liked his nephew the better he ſaid for not aſſuming the familiar and too eaſy manners, ſo diſagreeable to him in the behaviour of moſt of the young men he ſaw; and Miſs Fitz-Hayman, who liked his perſon better on every interview, and who never could for a moment ſuppoſe that any man could behold her's with indifference, imputed to reſpect and admiration that diſtant politeneſs which was intended to conceal averſion. Lady Caſtlenorth, however, who had ſeen more of the world than her daughter, and had not the ſame prejudices as her huſband, was by no means pleaſed with the obſervations ſhe made in the courſe of the day, nor with the pleaſure ſhe ſaw

for

for the firſt time in the eyes of Willoughby when the moment of their departure arrived. This was not till four in the morning. The late hour of dinner, and the parties which were made for cards, brought on a ſupper at near two, of which Lady Caſtlenorth ſeemed to expect her gueſts would partake: they ſtaid therefore; Lord Caſtlenorth retiring early, by the advice of Mrs. Calder; and the univerſatility of Lady Caſtlenorth's knowledge being diſplayed the whole time to the extreme fatigue of Willoughby, and by no means to the ſatisfaction of his ſiſter, who found in her aunt a deſire to monopolize not only all the converſation, but the attention of every man preſent, to whom ſhe contrived to addreſs herſelf by turns, and with whom ſhe appeared immediately offended, if Mrs. Molyneux, whom ſhe conſidered and treated as a pretty automaton, attracted even for a moment any of that admiration that ſhe was generally, at her own parties and among her own friends, accuſtomed to engroſs.

Willoughby was ſet down by his ſiſter at his own lodgings, and Mrs. Molyneux herſelf knew nothing of Celeſtina's departure till breakfaſt the next day; when buſied with preparations for a ball ſubſcribed for by ſome noblemen of her acquaintance, ſhe liſtened to the information hardly knowing ſhe received it, and teſtified no other concern than by ſaying coldly—"I wiſh ſhe had ſtaid till to-morrow, for ſhe has really ſomething of a taſte, and I ſhould have liked to have had her here when I dreſs." This important dreſs, however, was too momentous to ſuffer her to think long of any human being; and when her brother

brother called upon her about three o'clock, ſhe was adjuſting the ornaments on a tiara of her own invention, and had forgotten for the moment not only the ſudden journey of Celeſtina but Celeſtina herſelf.

Willoughby ſat down by her; and in hopes of Celeſtina's coming in, entered into converſation on frivolous ſubjects, to which he in fact gave ſo little attention that he hardly heard the anſwers his ſiſter gave him. He deſired, however, to prolong the time of his ſtay as much as poſſible, that without aſking for Celeſtina, he might ſee her; and he knew, that buſied as Mrs. Molyneux was, he ſhould have an opportunity of ſpeaking to her without obſervation.

The tiara was at length ornamented, and no Celeſtina appeared: Willoughby then enquired why ſhe did not aſſiſt at an operation ſo important, and heard with pain and amazement that ſhe had left the houſe at five o'clock that morning.

"And whither is ſhe gone?" ſaid he in a voice hardly audible: "and how could you ſuffer her to go?"

"Oh! as to that," anſwered Mrs. Molyneux, quite regardleſs of his diſtreſs, "ſhe has taken thoſe lodgings you know in Devonſhire that you have ſo often heard her ſpeak of; and for her going, you know ſhe has long determined on it, and indeed I did not oppoſe it, thinking as things are, it was the very beſt reſolution ſhe could take."

"As things are!" repeated Willoughby, trying vainly to ſtifle the painful ſenſation his ſiſter's coldneſs and inſenſibility gave him: "I know not

not, Mrs. Molyneux, what you mean exactly, but——"

He was proceeding, when the hair dreſſer, who on theſe great occaſions was employed in preference to her own maid, was announced; and Mrs. Molyneux, ordering him into her powdering room, walked immediately away, and left Willoughby ſitting like a ſtatue by the dreſſing table ſhe had left.

He remained there near a quarter of an hour, in a ſtate of mind difficult to be deſcribed: the danger to which Celeſtina muſt be expoſed, alone and unprotected; the probability of his loſing her for ever; nay of her ſacrificing herſelf to ſome of thoſe pretenders whom he doubted not her beauty would attract, in the ſame ſpirit of diſintereſted heroiſm, as that which had determined her to quit London: the exceſſive tenderneſs he was conſcious of towards her, againſt which he found every hour the impoſſibility of contending, and the encreaſing diſguſt that he felt in contemplating the chains he had promiſed to put on, all contributed to overwhelm his mind with anguiſh, from which he ſaw not how it was eaſy or even poſſible to eſcape.

His firſt idea was to obtain a direction to Celeſtina, and follow her immediately; but he knew the delicacy of her mind, and he felt perfectly what was due to her ſituation:—reflections which checked thoſe intentions almoſt as ſoon as they were formed; and before he could decide on what he ought to do, he received from Molyneux, who had juſt come in and gone out again, an unſealed note, containing theſe lines:

"DEAR

" DEAR GEORGE,

" I am juſt returned from Lincoln's Inn, " where I have been to meet Atkins and ſome " other curſed bores about money: I cannot get " what I want of them: do contrive to let " me have five hundred this evening for my " pocket, and I wiſh you would arrange things " ſo as to have the remainder of the unpaid " five thouſand and intereſt ready by this day " ſe'nnight or it will much inconvenience me. " Caſtlenorth is your man; and it is but ſpeak- " ing for the money to have it. Let us ſee you " to-morrow to dinner.

" Your's ever,

" P. H. MOLYNEUX."

This note, ſo peremptorily requiring what the writer knew Willoughby could not obtain but by haſtily confirming thoſe meaſures which were ſo diſpleaſing to him; this unfeeling precipitation, which appeared only a fineſſe to compel him to plunge into them, rouſed Willoughby from the ſtate of undetermined anxiety he had been in, into anger and indignation: his firſt ſolicitude however was to raiſe inſtantly the five hundred pounds for that evening's play, which was clearly the meaning of his brother in law; and ſnatching up his hat, he left the houſe, determining, in the firſt emotions of his reſentment, to enter it no more. He took his way towards the city, and applying to a banker in Lombard-ſtreet, in whoſe hands his father had kept his money,

money, and who had had conſiderable advantages by his own affairs during his minority, he obtained, not without ſolicitation the moſt painful to his pride and on terms as hard as would have been demanded by a common money lender, the ſum he wanted; which he encloſed in a cover, and ſent by one of the clerks, with theſe words:

"Mr. Willoughby encloſes to Mr. Molyneux the ſum for which he has ſo preſſing an occaſion, and aſſures him he will loſe no time in procuring the reſt, that all pecuniary tranſactions may be at the end between them."

It was with great difficulty he bridled the natural vehemence of his temper, and forbore to expreſs with bitterneſs the diſpleaſure Molyneux's proceeding had given him. More reſolute than ever not to be dictated to by his brother in law, and deteſting more than before the marriage which was thus intended to be forced upon him, diſſatisfied with every idea that occurred to him, and having no friend in London to whom he could open his oppreſſed heart, he determined at length to procure a direction to Celeſtina, and returning immediately to Cambridge himſelf, conſult a friend he had there, on whoſe judgment and attachment he had an equal reliance, how he ſhould avoid an alliance with the woman he deteſted and the hazard he now incurred of loſing the woman he adored.

He ſent therefore a ſervant, as ſoon as he returned to his lodgings, to procure from the ſervants of Molyneux a copy of the direction that

that had been put on the trunks ſent to Celeſtina. This being obtained, he ordered a poſt chaiſe, and late as it was, and without giving any account of himſelf either to his ſiſter or the Caſtlenorths, he ſet out for Cambridge, and arrived at his college about four in the morning of the next day.

CHAPTER XI.

CELESTINA in the mean time became better reconciled to the plan of life ſhe had adopted; and after being near a week at her new abode, during which time ſhe heard nothing either of Willoughby or his ſiſter, ſhe wrote to the latter as follows:

"My dear Mrs. Molyneux will be glad to "hear that her wandering friend is ſettled con- "tentedly, if not happily, in her new abode "and has already ſubdued her mind to her for- "tune ſo much as to regret only the ſociety of "thoſe ſhe has been ſo long accuſtomed to love "and by no means the ſcenes in which ſhe has "left them. My habitation is in the houſe of a "man who was formerly maſter of a coaſting "veſſel, in which occupation having made money "enough to ſupport himſelf and his wife in their "old age, and all his children being married

"and

" and provided for, he built this houſe a few
" miles from the port where he uſed to trade:
" their only ſervant is a mere Weſt country pai-
" ſanne, who does the buſineſs which the good
" old woman herſelf is unequal to; whoſe not
" frequent, but ſomewhat loud and ſhrill re-
" monſtrances to Jenny, when ſhe is careleſs or
" neglectful, are the only ſounds I ever hear to
" remind me that there are ſuch things as anger
" or contention in the world. The ſcene around
" me is now dreary enough; but in a few weeks
" ſpring will produce new pleaſures for me; and
" I ſhall hail the firſt primroſe with as much de-
" light as I can feel from any thing, but from
" that moſt welcome ſight, the face of an old
" friend. My dear Matilda, you pity, I know,
" the merely negative life I have choſen: enli-
" ven it then ſometimes by your kind recollection,
" and find time now and then to write to me,
" if it be only to ſay you are well. Your bro-
" ther's marriage may at this period occupy you;
" yet I hope you will not even now forget me,
" nor fail to recollect the tender intereſt which
" muſt ever exiſt for your happineſs, and that
" of all you love, in the grateful heart of your
" affectionate

" CELESTINA DE MORNAY."

Feb. 7, 17—.

This letter arrived a day after Willoughby's abrupt departure. Between the continual and unceaſing hurry in which ſhe lived, and her vexation at that event, ſhe hardly read it, but

threw it carelesly by on her toilet, where it remained forgotten like the writer of it.

On the day Willoughby had dined and supped in Grosvenor street, the whole family had been much dissatisfied with his conduct, except his uncle; who retaining much of form and ceremony in his own manners, was willing to impute his coldness to respect, and his distant civility to veneration: but the mother and daughter were by no means content with his deportment; and though they concealed their feelings as it were by mutual consent, their pride was equally alarmed, and both resolved to have an early explanation.

Lady Castlenorth, however, whose policy only had power to restrain awhile the ebullitions of her wounded pride, waited one day in hopes that Willoughby would in a family conference testify more ardour for the match than he had done in mixed company; but Willoughby never appeared; and her indignation now knowing no bounds, she ordered her coach, and on the next stalked with more than usual majesty into the dressing room of Mrs. Molyneux just as she had finished her breakfast, which was, owing to the hour on which she went to bed the preceding morning, even later than usual.

Lady Castlenorth hardly spoke to Mrs. Molyneux when she entered, but demanded in an imperious tone what was become of Mr. Willoughby.

The lady to whom she thus abruptly addressed herself was as haughty and of as high consequence in her own estimation as Lady Castlenorth herself; and feeling and resenting her rude

and

and peremptory ſtile, ſhe anſwered, with almoſt as little complaiſance in her manner, that ſhe knew not.

"You don't know, Madam!" exclaimed the imperious Viſcounteſs; "you dont know! Very extraordinary ſurely. What am I to underſtand from all this?"

"Of that alſo I am ignorant," replied Mrs. Molyneux. "Mr. Willoughby, Madam, is his own maſter; and I really can no more account for than direct his actions."

"Aſtoniſhing!" re-aſſumed Lady Caſtlenorth: "that a man ſituated as he is, who is not an abſolute ideot, ſhould behave in this manner in an affair on which his very exiſtence as a man of faſhion depends: but dont imagine, Miſtreſs Molyneux, that *my* daughter——"

"Dear Madam," interrupted Matilda, irritated by the ſupercilious and inſolent tone in which her Ladyſhip ſpoke, and particularly the emphaſis ſhe put on the word Miſtreſs, "I beg and entreat that you will ſpare your anger. I at leaſt cannot deſerve it, for I have no influence over my brother. I dare ſay he has ſome reaſons for having left London ſo abruptly, though I aſſure you I do not know them."

"You don't!—I do: he is gone after that creature, whom your mother, to her utter diſgrace, brought up in the family, and with whom ſhe ſuffered her ſon to live in habits of intimacy which ſhock me every time I think of it."

At this moment Mr. Molyneux entered with a letter in his hand, and hardly in his haſte noticing

ticing Lady Caſtlenorth, he told his wife that the letter was that inſtant delivered to him by an expreſs, that his father was dying, and that they muſt immediately ſet out for Ireland at his earneſt entreaty. "Haſten therefore," ſaid he, "to prepare yourſelf, for the chaiſe I have ſent for will be at the door in a moment. Your Ladyſhip will excuſe us I am ſure on ſuch an occaſion," added he, addreſſing himſelf to Lady Caſtlenorth. "Matilda, we have not a moment to loſe: direct your maid to prepare what you want to take with you, and to follow herſelf with the baggage that may not be ſo immediately neceſſary."

"And where is Willoughby?" cried Lady Caſtlenorth, raiſing her voice: "I inſiſt upon ſeeing him."

"I believe he has left London," anſwered Molyneux; "but I aſſure you I know not whither he is gone. I dare ſay your Ladyſhip will ſoon hear of him. In the mean time pray pardon me; it is impoſſible for me now to have the honour of attending you."

He then left the room, as his wife had done already; and Lady Caſtlenorth, burſting with anger and indignation which ſhe had nobody to liſten to, returned in all the fury of mortified pride to her own houſe.

While ſhe was there meditating how to revenge the neglect ſhewn to her daughter, of which ſhe now no longer doubted, Willoughby was pouring out all the diſtreſſes of his heart to a friend whom heaven ſeemed to have ſent him for their alleviation.

Mr.

Mr. Vavaſour, his moſt intimate friend, had been abſent when he left Cambridge on his haſty and reluctant journey to London, but was now returned, and to him Willoughby immediately diſcloſed the cauſe of that uneaſineſs which his friend perceived he ſuffered under even before he ſpoke.

"What ſhall I do?" ſaid he, as he leaned on the table, "how extricate myſelf from the moſt inſupportable of engagements? how ſatisfy this narrow and unfeeling Molyneux? my ſoul revolts from the odious neceſſity of being obliged to him for forbearance: yet to ſell my eſtates—is more painful to me than any meaſure but marrying Miſs Fitz-Hayman. Yet my promiſe, my aſſurances to my mother——I ſee not how I can eſcape from the difficulties that encompaſs me."

"You make more of them ſurely, my dear George," replied Vavaſour, "than is neceſſary. What! ſhould either a promiſe or an exigence compel you to be miſerable for life; then indeed there would be no eſcape: but now, ſurely, my friend, your eſcape is not difficult."

"Were you ſituated as I am then, how would you act?"

"Why I would without heſitation declare off with the woman I did not like, and marry the woman I did: that is, if I were diſpoſed to marry at all."

"And would you do this, Vavaſour, contrary to a ſolemn promiſe given to her who cannot now releaſe me from it? and then

how can I act in regard to Molyneux? be the conſequence what it will he ſhall never again dun me for money, and——"

"Never!" interrupted Vavaſour warmly, "if you will liſten to me. I am not quite of age it is true, but my fortune is ſuch, that nothing is eaſier than for me to raiſe this paltry five thouſand pounds, or twice the ſum, on no very exorbitant terms. I have already taken up money for my own pleaſures, and ſhall I heſitate when my friend has real occaſion for it? In a week's time the money ſhall be ready for you. Pray then let us hear no more of any difficulties of that ſort, and as for your promiſe—the good lady, when ſhe extorted it, could never think it binding."

"Speak not lightly of her, my dear friend," cried Willoughby, "that I may feel all the kindneſs of the former part of your ſpeech without alloy: ſhe was a woman whom, had you known, would have reverenced and loved, and it was in kindneſs only that ſhe made me give her an engagement——"

"To make yourſelf miſerable. I am, you know, George, an Epicurean; you are ſomewhat of a Stoic I ſuppoſe; and if that is the caſe, fulfil your promiſe, take your heireſs, and philoſophize at your leiſure. I have never ſeen your Celeſtina, you know; but from your deſcription of her, and your long attachment, I ſhould pity you—I am afraid I ſhould deſpiſe you—I am ſure I ſhould not love you—were you to ſacrifice ſuch a creature to any pecuniary conſiderations. Come, my dear fellow, aſſure yourſelf

yourſelf that if five thouſand pounds or more will relieve you from what weighs on your ſpirits about Molyneux's matter, it is your's; the other affair you muſt ſettle with your own heart, and I leave you to argue it together."

Vavaſour then quitted the room; and Willoughby, releaſed from his anxiety about his debt by the generoſity of his friend, gave himſelf up to all thoſe pleaſant images which preſented themſelves to his mind. To be united immediately with Celeſtina, to carry her down to Alveſtone, and there to enter on a plan of œconomy which ſhould in a very few years retrieve his circumſtances, was a viſion which he found ſo much delight in cheriſhing, that he drove from his mind as much as poſſible the painful objections that ſtill cruelly intruded themſelves to deſtroy it: the converſation of Vavaſour helped to put them entirely to flight; and Willoughby, perſuaded that by the projects of œconomy he had formed he ſhould ſoon be enabled to pay his friend the money ſo generouſly offered him, agreed without much heſitation to accept it. The young men then ſettled that they would go the next day but one to London, ſtay there long enough to negociate this buſineſs, and then go down together to Alveſtone, from whence Willoughby, who had no inclination to encounter Lady Caſtlenorth perſonally, determined to write to his uncle, reſigning all pretentions to the honor intended him, and immediately to complete his marriage with her who had ſo long been miſtreſs of his heart. This arrangement, once made, became

every moment more ſeducing to his imagination; ſtill the words of his mother, the ſolemn charge given him with her laſt breath, returned now and then to diſturb his viſionary felicity: but Celeſtina, always ſo lovely in his eyes, leaning on his arm amid the ſhades of Alveſton, the delight of all who beheld her, the admiration of his friends, the patroneſs of his tenants, the protectreſs of the poor, was an image ſo deliciouſly ſoothing to his fancy, that by indulging it he at length perſuaded himſef that his mother, who had ſo very tenderly loved her, would, could ſhe be ſenſible of all the happineſs they ſhould ſhare together, applaud his violation of his promiſe and ſanction his choice.

Vavaſour, gay, generous, open hearted, and volatile, always eagerly following himſelf his own inclinations, and as warmly ſolicitous for his friend's gratification as his own, encouraged as much as poſſible all tendency in Willoughby to throw off any adherence to what he deemed tyranny beyond the grave; and by the time the negociation for the loan was completed, which took them up near a week, Willoughby had no longer any ſcruples remaining. His only buſineſs in town then was to pay Molyueux, whoſe conduct had offended him ſo much that he had not been to the houſe: as ſoon however as the money was ready, he wrote a note to his brother in law, ſignifying that he would on the next day meet him at his attorney's chambers to ſettle all accounts between them. The ſervant who was ſent brought the note back; and Willoughby then firſt learning that his ſiſter and her huſ-

band

band were embarked for Ireland, depoſited the money at a banker's, and wrote a cold letter to Molyneux, ſignifying that it waited his orders. He then gave directions to his own ſolicitor to take proper receipts on the payment of it, and with Vavaſour haſtened down to Alveſtone, in the neighbourhood of which place he knew Celeſtina was; but he had determined not to ſee her till he had obviated every objection ſhe could make to his plan of happineſs, by breaking at once and for ever with the Caſtlenorths; a taſk on which, reſolved as he was to execute it, he could not think without a mixture of concern and apprehenſion that he was aſhamed of feeling, and dared by no means betray to his friend Vavaſour; who, without knowing any thing of the Caſtlenorths himſelf, had made up his mind that they were an odious and diſagreeable ſet, and from ſuch, whatever might be their rank, he always flew away himſelf, and encouraged his friends to do it at whatever riſk. If he was careleſs and even rude towards thoſe whom he did not wiſh to pleaſe, he was altogether as amiable and attentive to thoſe to whom he ſought to be acceptable. His diſlikes and his attachments were equally warm, and the latter had hitherto been rather warm than permanent.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XII.

WHILE theſe things were paſſing at Cambridge and in London, Celeſtina underwent the cruelleſt anxiety at not hearing from Mrs. Molyneux; but all her conjectures ended in the painful concluſion that the preparations and celebration of Willoughby's marriage entirely engaged her, and prevented her writing. All her reaſon was now ſummoned to ſupport her againſt the ſhock which the certainty of this event would give her. With a beating heart, and in breathleſs agitation, ſhe ran over the paper, which once a week a travelling newſman brought from Exeter, and where ſhe knew the marriage of a man of ſo much conſequence in the neighbourhood would not fail to be inſerted.

No

No ſuch intelligence however appeared; and Celeſtina, imagining that the marriage had notwithſtanding certainly taken place, endeavoured, ſince ſhe could not conquer her regret, to divert it, by doing what ſhe could towards ſoftening the ſorrews and relieving the diſtreſſes of the unfortunate Jeſſy, whoſe patient endurance of evils, evidently ſeverer than her own, whoſe fortitude in tearing herſelf perhaps for ever from the man ſhe loved, and ſacrificing the indulgence of her affection to his intereſt, made Celeſtina ſometimes aſhamed of the murmurs ſhe found excited in her heart by leſs inconveniencies, and bluſh at the reluctance with which ſhe had ſubmitted to the loſs of a man, whoſe regard for her ſeemed already to have yielded to the influence of pecuniary advantage, and family convenience.

But in deſpite of every argument ſhe could bring to ſubdue the pain ariſing from the recollection of loſt happineſs, and totally ſilence the Syren voice of hope which now and then preſented the poſſibility of more favourable days, the uncertainty whether the event to which ſhe laboured to become reconciled had really happened, diſturbed and rendered her reſtleſs and uneaſy. Jeſſy, to whom ſhe now ſent to deſire her company for a little time, joyfully accepted the ſummons; and in her company Celeſtina felt great ſatisfaction, though ſhe had never diſcloſed to her any part of the ſorrow that had oppreſſed her, or given the remoteſt hint of her attachment to Willoughby. All the indulgence ſhe allowed herſelf was; that of ſometimes chuſing to walk towards a knoll at the extremity of the

the common, which afforded an extenſive view towards the Weſt; from thence, by the help of a teleſcope lent her by her landlord, Celeſtina had diſcovered a clump of firs in Alveſtone Park; and though they were near ten miles diſtant, and without a glaſs, appeared only a dark ſpot above the reſt of the landſcape, ſhe found a melancholy pleaſure in diſtinguiſhing them, and would frequently, as ſhe leant on Jeſſy's arm in their penſive rambles, fix her eyes on that diſtant object, gaze on it ſteadily for two or three minutes, and then with a deep ſigh turn away, and walk ſilently home.

She encouraged however the artleſs Jeſſy to talk to her of Cathcart; and the poor girl, pleaſed with every opportunity of repeating his name, and flattered by the tender intereſt Celeſtina took in their ſtory, was never weary of ſpeaking of him. She at length acquired confidence enough to produce ſome of the letters he wrote to her; and Celeſtina, who had very naturally imputed much of the praiſe Jeſſy had beſtowed on his writing and on his ſtyle to the fond partiality of her affection for him, was ſurpriſed to find in theſe letters the moſt manly, clear, and ſenſible ſtile ſhe had almoſt ever met with.

The generous emulation which appeared between theſe lovers, their diſintereſted tenderneſs, and the ſteadineſs of their mutual attachment, raiſed in Celeſtina admiration and even reſpect, and every hour encreaſed her inclination to contribute to their happineſs.

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But theſe intentions ſhe had no way of executing but by means of Willoughby, who was, as ſhe knew from long experience, ever ready to befriend the unfortunate; and on ſuch an occaſion ſhe thought, that as ſoon as he was married ſhe might, without any impropriety, addreſs herſelf to him; and as the farm which old Winnington, the grandfather of Jeſſy, poſſeſſed, adjoined to his eſtate at Alveſtone, Celeſtina imagined he could hardly fail of having ſome influence, which ſhe knew he would be ready to exert for her unfortunate friend.

In meditating how to adminiſter to the afflictions of others, her own ſorrows were at leaſt mitigated: but the calm ſhe outwardly aſſumed was the mere effort of reſolution, while her anxiety to hear of Willoughby and of his ſiſter encreaſed every hour; and as the delay grew more unaccountable, it became almoſt inſupportably painful.

It was now the beginning of March: the weather was uncommonly cold and dreary; and a deep ſnow, which had fallen ſome days before, had confined Celeſtina and her companion almoſt entirely to the houſe. It was very unuſual to ſee any perſon paſs by the houſe, near which there was no public road, and the inclemency of the ſeaſon rendered it ſtill leſs frequent: Jeſſy, therefore, who went to the window by accident to fetch ſome work that lay there, mentioned to Celeſtina, as a matter of ſome ſurpriſe, that two foot paſſengers, who had the appearance of gentlemen, were croſſing the common towards the houſe.

Celeſtina,

Celeſtina, who was at that moment meditating, with her eyes fixed on the fire, on the long, long ſpace of time that had elapſed ſince ſhe had heard of Willoughby, and on all the events that might have taken place in that period, gave very little attention to this intelligence, and on Jeſſy's repeating it, anſwered that probably it was ſome perſons who had loſt their way in the ſnow, and were coming to the houſe for directions to regain the road.

To Jeſſy, however, the idea of Cathcart was ever preſent: one of the ſtrangers was not unlike him in figure as ſhe fancied, though both were wrapped in great coats; and the poſſibility of his having come in ſearch of her, had no ſooner ſtruck her, than with eager eyes and a beating heart ſhe watched every ſtep they took: at length they entered the little gate that divided the garden of the houſe from the common; Jeſſy was then convinced that neither of them were Cathcart; but her curioſity was ſtrongly excited, and liſtening to the queſtions they put to the ſervant who went to the door, ſhe diſtinctly heard one of them enquire for Miſs de Mornay.

Celeſtina was now in her turn alarmed; and trembling, though ſhe knew not why, ſhe deſired Jeſſy to go down and aſk who it was, but before ſhe could be obeyed the door opened, and ſhe ſaw, with emotions to which language cannot do juſtice—Willoughby himſelf!

The firſt idea that ſtruck her was, that he was come to announce his marriage; and the air of triumph and ſatisfaction his countenance wore,

ſeemed

ſeemed to tell her he was the happy huſband of Miſs Fitz-Hayman.

Long as ſhe had been accuſtomed to dwell on this idea, ſhe ſhrunk with terror from its ſuppoſed reality, and pale and trembling drew back, as he eagerly advanced towards her:——"My heavenly girl! my own Celeſtina!" cried he as he took her hand. This addreſs, from the married Willoughby, ſeemed an inſult: ſhe withdrew her hand with an air of reſentment, would have ſpoken but could not, and unable to ſupport herſelf ſat down.

Willoughby, whoſe own anxious emotions had too much prevented his conſidering how ſhe might be affected by his abrupt appearance, now ſaw that he had been too precipitate. He placed himſelf by her, and again taking the hand ſhe had withdrawn, he enquired, with more tenderneſs and leſs impetuoſity, if ſhe was ſorry to ſee him. Again Celeſtina would have ſpoken, but her native pride again refuſed to aſſiſt her; and while ſhe was vainly endeavouring to acquire reſolution enough to congratulate him on his ſuppoſed marriage, ſhe learned that he had not only broken for ever with Miſs Fitz-Hayman, but was come to offer himſelf to her, who had from his childhood been the ſole poſſeſſor of his affections.

This ſudden and unexpected happineſs was too much. Her reaſon, which in the ſevereſt calamity had never quite deſerted her, now ſeemed unequal to tidings ſo overwhelming, and for a moment or two ſhe ſat like a ſtatue; till Willoughby in that well known voice, and with that graceful

graceful and manly tenderneſs which had rendered him ever ſo dear to her, related all that had paſſed from the hour of their laſt parting, and the reſolution he had adopted of ſacrificing that wealth, which could not beſtow happineſs, to the long and incurable paſſion he had conceived for an object ſo deſerving, and without whom no advantages of fortune or ſituation could give his life the ſmalleſt value.

Tears of gratitude and affection now fell from the eyes of Celeſtina; and as he found the tumult of her ſpirits ſubſide, he went on to relate to her, with the moſt generous delicacy, the plans he had formed for their future life, and the means by which he hoped to retrieve his affairs, without ſacrificing his happineſs. Tenderly however as he touched on theſe ſubjects, his violated promiſe to his mother returned with all its force to the recollection of Celeſtina. Willoughby, whoſe eyes were fixed on hers, ſaw the painful idea by their expreſſion as ſoon as it aroſe, and in a voice that trembled from emotions he could not repreſs, he endeavoured to obviate the objections he feared ſhe was about to make, even before ſhe could utter them.

All his eloquence, however, could not ſilence that monitor in the breaſt of Celeſtina, which told her that there was more of ſophiſtry than of ſound reaſon in his arguments; but fondly attached to him as ſhe was, it was ſophiſtry too enchanting for her to have courage to attempt detecting it. She wiſhed to be convinced Willoughby was right; to ſee him happy had almoſt from her earlieſt recollection been the ſecond wiſh of her heart;

heart; for perhaps to have the power of making him ſo had always, even unknown to herſelf, been the firſt: that happineſs ſeemed now to depend upon her; and ſhe determined (after one of thoſe ſhort ſtruggles, in which, when inclination and duty contend, the former has too often the advantage,) to ſtifle within her own boſom every painful remembrance, to think as he thought, and in rendering happy the ſon of her benefactreſs, to acquit herſelf through her future life of the debt of gratitude ſhe owed her.

Celeſtina, therefore, made no objection to the propoſals Willoughby laid before her, which were, that they ſhould be married privately in about ten days, and take up their abode at Alveſtone in the ſame ſtile they meant always to reſide in. Theſe preliminaries being arranged, Willoughby beſought her to permit him to introduce Vavaſour to her, who had been waiting below; he went down himſelf to bring up his friend; and Celeſtina, in the moment of his abſence, endeavoured to recall her preſence of mind, and habituate herſelf to think with leſs agitation on the happineſs of being the wife of her beloved Willoughby.

Vavaſour, from the ardour with which his friend had ſpoken of her perſonal perfections, was prepared to find her very lovely; and Willoughby on their firſt interview watched his looks, trying to diſcover if his expectations had been anſwered: they were completely ſo: the agitation ſhe had ſuffered had raiſed the glow of her cheeks, and given more ſoftneſs to her eyes, in which the tears yet trembled; while the natural dignity of her manner received in his opinion new

charms

charms from the remains of embarraſſment which ſhe endeavoured to ſhake off, and in which, after a few moments, ſhe ſucceeded ſo well, that they all became as much at their eaſe, as if they had all been as long acquainted as Willoughby and Celeſtina.

Jeſſy, who had left the room on Willoughby's firſt entrance, was now deſired by Celeſtina to return. During her ſhort abſence, while ſhe prepared a repaſt of cold meat for the hungry travellers who had walked from Alveſtone, Celeſtina related to them as much of her hiſtory as intereſted both of them in her favour; and Willoughby, who found in every ſentiment and every action of Celeſtina ſomething to encreaſe his tenderneſs and admiration, was charmed with the generous pity ſhe had ſhewn to her humble friend, and promiſed her all his influence to obtain for her the proviſion ſhe had a right to expect from her grandfather, and unite her to her deſerving lover.

Willoughby hung with fondneſs, approaching to adoration on every word Celeſtina uttered, and forgot, that for this time the delight of ſeeing her muſt be ſhort; Vavaſour, gay, volatile, and enjoying with extreme good humour the happineſs of his friend, was little accuſtomed to think at all; and Jeſſy was in too humble a ſituation to offer her opinion: on Celeſtina only, therefore, the prudence of the whole party depended; and as the ſnow was very deep, and they had between eight and nine miles to Alveſtone, ſhe at laſt ventured to hint that it was time they ſhould go.

To Willoughby, the neceſſity of quitting her had never occurred, and he now heard of it as a ſentence of baniſhment; but Celeſtina repeating that ſhe ſhould be very uneaſy if in ſuch weather they delayed ſo long a walk to a late hour in the evening, he ſaw that he ſhould make her really uncomfortable by his ſtay; and having obtained leave to ſee her the next day, and every day till they were to part no more, he at laſt conſented to go, that he and his companion might reach Alveſtone before the night fell.

When he releaſed the hand of Celeſtina, which he kiſſed a thouſand times as he bade her adieu, ſhe turned towards the window, and her eyes followed him acroſs the heath, till the furze and thorns at a diſtance concealed him from her ſight. The very traces of his footſteps in the ſnow were dear to her; and in that frame of mind, which renders it hardly conſcious of its own ſenſations, ſhe ſtill gazed on *them* when ſhe could diſtinguiſh *him* no longer. Jeſſy, though ſhe could eaſily account for her ſilence, became after ſome time uneaſy, and ſpeaking to her, rouſed her from her reverie: ſhe then ſat down in her uſual place, and attempted to quiet the perturbation of her mind by re-aſſuming her uſual occupations; but the ſudden tranſition within the laſt three hours, from lifeleſs deſpondence to a proſpect of the utmoſt felicity ſhe had ever imagined was too violent to ſuffer her ſpirits to return to their uſual calm. The recollection of her deceaſed benefactreſs, and of the fatal promiſe Willoughby had given her, recurred in deſpite of her endeavours to eſcape from it: and though,

reſolute

reſolute as he appeared to be, to reconcile himſelf to its violation, there was nobody who had power by their interference to prevent the execution of the determination he had made; though nothing was likely to prevent the marriage on which he had reſolved upon; yet the mind of Celeſtina remained impreſſed with a confuſed ſenſation rather than any diſtinct proſpect of the happineſs ſhe had been offered; and the tranſactions of the day appeared like a dream, from which ſhe feared, by examining its reality, to be awakened.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIII.

NEITHER the perſon or the mind of Celeſtina were of that ſort which make the ſtrongeſt impreſſion on the firſt view; and intereſting as her figure and face were, it was the grace as well as the ſymmetry of the former, and the expreſſion rather than the beauty of the latter that made her altogether ſo enchanting. Willoughby and Vavaſour were now with her every day; and while her lover found in every hour of thoſe days more reaſon to congratulate himſelf on the choice he had made, his friend grew inſenſibly ſo intereſted for Celeſtina, that volatile and unſteady as he had been till then, he found, that though, conſidering her already as Willoughby's wife, he could form neither hopes or deſigns for himſelf, yet that her happineſs was the firſt wiſh of his heart;

heart; and that without violating his warm friendſhip towards his friend, he, for the firſt time in his life, envied a man who was going to be married.

The preſent happineſs of Willougby could be exceeded in his idea only by that which he imagined he had ſecured to himſelf by having determined to live only for the happineſs of Celeſtina; and in continually contemplating her perfections, he endeavoured to juſtify to himſelf the meaſures he had taken, and to diſmiſs from his mind the unpleaſing circumſtances which might have robbed him of her for ever. He had written, after many attempts, to Lord Caſtlenorth, declining to carry any farther a negociation in which his inclinations had never any ſhare; and though he ſoftened this mortifying information as well as he could, he was ſenſible of the bitterneſs and reſentment it muſt create, and indeed was ſo little ſatisfied himſelf with his performance, that after the fifth or ſixth attempt, he would ſtill have delayed or wholly have evaded ſending the letter, if Vavaſour had not with many arguments and much difficulty perſuaded him, that, reſolved as he was to break with the family, any letter he could write in explanation, would be leſs offenſive than total ſilence.

Celeſtina was very ſolicitous to know how he had acquitted himſelf towards his uncle; yet, as he ſeemed ſeduouſly to avoid the ſubject, ſhe feared to give him pain by recurring to it, and yielded perhaps too eaſily to the artifices ſhe ſaw he uſed to draw her thoughts from it: while he, ſtudying every turn of her ſpeaking face, often

often ſaw, by the penſive caſt it aſſumed, uneaſy thoughts ariſe in her mind; and on thoſe occaſions, exerting himſelf to diſpel them, he delighted to recall their ſparkling vivacity to her eyes:

"E'l lampeggiar dell' angelico riſo,"*

which never beſtowed greater charms on any countenance than on that of Celeſtina.

It was now decided that as ſoon as the ſettlements were finiſhed, which Willoughby had directed rather according to his love than to his fortune, and which were likely to take up about three weeks, Celeſtina was to become miſtreſs of Alveſtone. He had promiſed her to forbear making about that delightful place any of the alterations he meditated, till his income was ſo far retrieved as to allow him to do it with prudence, but he had a thouſand reaſons ready why Celeſtina ſhould go there every day; for to reſide there entirely, till ſhe was married, ſhe had refuſed with ſuch firmneſs as left Willoughby nothing to urge with any chance of ſucceſs. Partial as himſelf to this ſpot, where ſhe had paſſed the happieſt hours of her life, ſhe yet, in her preſent ſituation, felt diſtreſſed and uneaſy at the thoughts of viſiting it; but Willoughby preſ-

* PETRARCH. The lightning of the angelic ſmile.

ſed it with ſo much earneſtneſs, that, as the weather was now fine, and ſhe had defended herſelf as long as ſhe could, ſhe at length, on condition of having Jeſſy with her, agreed to go there for a whole day, and that Willoughby ſhould fetch them both in his phaeton. *C'eſt le premier pas qui coute*, ſays a French proverb; and he longed to have this day over, knowing that the memorials of his mother, which Celeſtina would there meet with, and which he feared would give her ſome uneaſy ſenſations, would, after ſhe was accuſtomed to ſee them, loſe their effect on her mind, and that ſhe would inſenſibly learn to behold them rather with agreeable than uneaſy ſentiments.

He perſuaded himſelf that ſuch a revolution had been effected in his own mind, and that notwithſtanding his clear recollection of certain forcible words his mother had uſed in their laſt melancholy interview, he was, in making himſelf happy, doing that, which, if ſhe had yet any knowledge of human events, ſhe would moſt warmly approve.

Intoxicated with his paſſion, which reaſon and taſte ſeemed ſo entirely to juſtify, and an extorted promiſe only to oppoſe, Willoughby no longer ſuffered any uneaſy recollections to caſt a ſhade over the bright proſpect opening before him. He now ſaw Celeſtina, the woman he had from his infancy adored, in that ſpot where his local affections were ſo fondly ſettled. Nothing ſeemed like to impede his paſſing with her there a life of uninterrupted felicity; and till their union could take place, his greateſt anxiety

was

was to detach her imagination from all thoſe objections which might yet linger in her mind, and to confirm her in the perſuaſion that to conſtitute through her future life the happineſs of the ſon of her benefactreſs, would be her beſt acquittal of thoſe obligations ſhe owed to her in the early part of it.

Inſtead, therefore, of ſuffering her to viſit immediately the particular parts of the houſe which he knew would moſt forcibly recall ideas which might diſtreſs her, he deſired Vavaſour to attend on Jeſſy, and follow them into the garden, where, when they were at a little diſtance, he related to Celeſtina the meaſures he had already taken to reſtore or rather to introduce her amiable and injured friend to the favour of her grandfather. Celeſtina warmly approved his proceedings, and gratefully acknowledged his kindneſs, while the hope of ſeeing Jeſſy reſcued from the ſevere hardſhips to which ſhe muſt otherwiſe be expoſed, and rewarding the diſintereſted attachment of her deſerving lover, was moſt grateful to her generous heart. Willoughby himſelf never ſeemed ſo perfect as when thus employing his time and his power in the ſervice of the unhappy. The fine ſcenery around her never appeared to ſuch advantage as now, when ſhe leaned on one arm, while with the other he pointed out to her its various beauties; and at this moment the very ſeaſon ſeemed to add ſomething to her felicity. Within a few days the whole face of nature was changed: the ſnow, which had covered every object with cold uniformity, had now given place to the bright

verdure of infant ſpring; the earlieſt trees and thoſe in the moſt ſheltered ſituations had put forth their tender buds; the copſes were ſtrewn with primroſes and March violets, and the garden glowing with the firſt flowers of the year; while inſtead of the uſually rude winds of the ſeaſon, thoſe gales only blew which

"Call forth the long expecting flowers
"And wake the purple year!"

Myriads of birds, who found food and ſhelter amid the ſhrubberies and woodwalks, ſeemed to hail with ſongs their future lovely protectreſs,

"Hopp'd in her walks and gambol'd in her eyes:"

and while every thing was thus gay and cheerful without, the houſe, when ſhe entered it, ſhewed her only contented faces: the old ſervants, its ancient and faithful inhabitants, had known and loved her from her earlieſt childhood, and rejoiced in the hope of ending their days in her ſervice; the tenants, who loved their young landlord, were glad to find, that inſtead of carrying his rents to London he was coming to ſettle among them; and the poor, who had now for ſome time ſeverely miſſed the bounty which had marked Mrs. Willoughby's annual reſidence

reſidence among them, invoked bleſſings on her ſon, from whom they were aſſured of more conſtant conſideration, from his own noble nature as well as from the influence of Celeſtina, who, as they well remembered, was formerly the ſucceſsful mediatrix between them and their deceaſed miſtreſs, when her own daughter had frequently heard their petitions with indifference, or avoided them with diſguſt.

In a few days after this firſt viſit to Alveſtone, a fortunate circumſtance occurred to faciliate the good offices Willoughby had undertaken in favour of Jeſſy Woodburn. The old female relation who had acquired unbounded influence over her grandfather died ſuddenly; and the old man, thus reſtored to the little power of reflection his very advanced age left him, and alarmed by the death of a perſon younger than himſelf, no longer refuſed to liſten to the remonſtrances of a clergyman in the neighbourhood, who had by Willoughby been engaged to ſpeak to him in favour of his daughter's child. He conſented to ſee her, provided no attempt was made to introduce her father to him, towards whom neither time, age, or ſickneſs, had blunted the aſperity of his hatred; but though theſe odious paſſions retained, from habitual indulgence, all their inveterate malignity, the ſofter feelings of natural affection were dead in him; and rather yielding to importunity than prompted by inclination, he conſented to receive his granddaughter to officiate about him as a ſervant, and ſtipulated that during his life ſhe ſhould be no expence to him; thus graſping to the laſt mo-

ment of his exiſtence, that which he had never enjoyed, and could no longer want. As he had nobody he valued more, he conſented however, after many perſuaſions, to make a will, by which he gave her every thing, on the expreſs condition, to uſe his own phraſe, that her father "might never be the better for it."

It was neceſſary, though this important point was carried, that Jeſſy ſhould, by reſiding with him, preclude the poſſibility of being again ſuperceded by ſome of thoſe mercenary beings who are in all ranks of life ready to ſurround the couch of the dying miſer: a neceſſity Celeſtina admitted with reluctance, and Jeſſy with tears and regret; but they were both conſoled by the reflection that a very ſhort time muſt in ſome degree re-unite them by the removal of Celeſtina to Alveſtone, which was within a walk of the farm at which her friend was now to reſide.

Willoughby, having thus far ſucceeded for the intereſting protegée of Celeſtina, determined to complete his generous work by attending to the ſituation of Cathcart. He knew nothing could more highly oblige *her*, to contribute to whoſe ſlighteſt ſatisfaction was the ſupreme pleaſure of his life; and his own good heart prompted him to loſe no time in relieving the unmerited diſtreſſes of a deſerving young man: he wrote, therefore, (without communicating what he had done) to Cathcart, encloſed him a bank note for his expences; and informing him of all that paſſed in regard to Jeſſy, deſired that he would relinquiſh his place with the attorney, and come down to Alveſtone, where Willoughby meant that

that the ſame day which gave him Celeſtina ſhould unite Cathcart to her humble friend.

The joy this unexpected turn of fortune gave to Cathcart can better be imagined than deſcribed. The ſickneſs of the ſoul, which long deſpondence and anxiety had produced, vaniſhed at once: his immediate care was to ſecure his ſiſter's and her children's ſupport during his abſence; and reſerving to himſelf no more of Willoughby's generous preſent than ſufficed for the expences of his journey, he took a tender leave of Mrs. Elphinſtone, aſſuring her that the firſt uſe he would make of his good fortune ſhould be to aſſiſt her; he then ſet out on a hired horſe for Alveſtone, where he arrived ten days before that which was fixed upon for his patron's happineſs and his own.

If Willoughby had been greatly intereſted for him before he ſaw him, he was much more ſo now that he found him very intelligent and well informed, with abilities that might have made his way to any ſituation of life, and a heart that would have done honour to the moſt exalted: his knowledge, which was very extenſive, was without pedantry, and his gratitude without ſervility. The meeting between him and Jeſſy, at which Willoughby contrived that Celeſtina ſhould be preſent, was very affecting; and after the firſt tranſports of happineſs ſo unexpected had a little ſubſided, Willoughby explained to them his views for the future. "You, my dear Jeſſy," ſaid he, "muſt not think of leaving your grandfather, who muſt know nothing of your marriage while he lives, which can, according to

the courſe of nature, be only a very little time; and as you may ſee each other every day, this partial ſeparation may for that little time be eaſily borne. As for you, Cathcart, you will ſtay with me: I have, in conſequence of my new plan of life, many regulations to make, and many accounts to ſettle, in which you can be of great uſe to me. Poor Beechcroft, my old ſteward, is in his eightieth year, and the palſy has lately made ſuch ravages in his intellects, that he is unequal to the common buſineſs of his office; while he lives however, and thinks himſelf capable of executing his truſt, I am very unwilling to mortify him by taking the affairs out of his hands: at his death I ſhall not replace him, but become my own ſteward; and you, my good friend, can be of the moſt effectual ſervice to me in preparing every thing for this arrangement: while your neighbourhood to the eſtate of which you will probably ſoon become maſter, will give you an opportunity of inſpecting it, and ſettling thoſe plans for the future which will I hope and believe make you a very fortunate man."

While the conſiderate kindneſs of Willoughby endeared him every hour to Celeſtina, and while the hearts of Cathcart and Jeſſy overflowed with gratitude, it would have been hardly poſſible for a happier party to have been any where found than that which now occaſionally inhabited Alveſtone, if the painful recollection of Willoughby's violated promiſe could have been entirely expelled from the conſcious recollection of Celeſtina, and if Vavaſour had not ſometimes felt towards Celeſtina ſomething bordering on

ſerious

ſerious love, which was a ſentiment ſo new to him, who had never thought with reſpectful affection of any woman before, and had paſſed too much of his time in ſcenes of faſhionable debauchery, that he hardly knew himſelf what it meant. He formed however no deſigns, for his temper was generous, candid, and artleſs; ſo artleſs indeed that he took no pains to conceal what he felt almoſt without underſtanding his feelings; and frequently fixed his eyes on Celeſtina with ſo impaſſioned a look, or ſpoke to her, or of her, with ſuch unreſerved marks of fondneſs and admiration, that Jeſſy and Cathcart both ſaw it with ſome alarm; but Willoughby, too liberal for jealouſy, and knowing his friend more inclined to general libertiniſm among the looſer part of the ſex than capable of a particular attachment to any woman of character; ſure of Celeſtina's affection, and imputing all Vavaſour's attentions to his admiration of beauty wherever found, either noticed not his manner, or held them to be wholly without conſequence; while Celeſtina, perfectly unconſcious of the power of her own charms, treated him with that affectionate familiarity which his own open and lively manners encouraged, and which his friendſhip for Willoughby, and the obligations they both owed to him, juſtified.

Only three days were now to intervene before that fixed for the double wedding, which was to be celebrated in the pariſh church at Alveſtone, in the preſence only of two truſty ſervants, and Vavaſour, who was to act as father to both the brides.

Very different proſpects of life from thoſe which now were before Willoughby and Celeſtina, had opened to Mr. and Mrs. Molyneux, who, on their arrival in Ireland, had found Sir Oſwald Molyneux juſt alive: he lingered unexpectedly a few weeks after their arrival, and then died, leaving to his ſon an immenſe fortune, of which Sir Philip haſtened to take poſſeſſion, and to diſplay, as ſoon as decency permitted, his wealth and his intereſt; while Matilda, now Lady Molyneux, loſt no opportunity of availing herſelf of the eclat which almoſt boundleſs fortune gave to novelty. Nobody was ſo much followed and admired; no taſte was ſo univerſally adopted, no parties ſo ſplendidly attended, as her's; and having thus attained the ſummit of what ſhe fancied happineſs, ſhe was in no haſte to return to England till ſhe had exhauſted the felicity Ireland offered her, and cheerfully acquieſced in her huſband's propoſal of ſtaying one ſummer at their magnificent ſeat about twenty miles from Dublin. In the mean time ſhe had heard from her brother, whoſe reſentment towards her huſband did not extend to her, of his having broke with the Caſtlenorths, and his intentions in regard to Celeſtina. She diſliked both Lady Caſtlenorth and her daughter, and therefore was pleaſed with their mortification and diſappointment: ſhe had now no pecuniary claims on her brother, and heard therefore with indifference his reſolution to marry a woman without fortune; and as to Celeſtina, though ſhe was incapable of any affection for her, yet ſhe thought ſhe would make a good quiet wife for her

her brother, and be well adapted to that inſipid domeſtic life, his turn for which ſhe had always pitied and deſpiſed. As Willoughby's juſt reſentment againſt Sir Philip had never given her any concern, ſhe gave herſelf no trouble to remove it; and Sir Philip himſelf, above all attention for the feelings of others, and too much a man of the very firſt faſhion to underſtand the claims of relationſhip, or to feel thoſe of friendſhip, was as unconcerned as if no ſuch reſentment had ever been deſerved; and while they both enjoyed their newly acquired conſequence in Ireland, Willoughby was ſuffered to proceed his own way at Alveſtone without remonſtrance and almoſt without notice.

But neither the neglect of his ſiſter, or the ſullen reſentment of his uncle and Lady Caſtlenorth, from whom he heard nothing, now gave Willoughby any concern: his happineſs it was out of their power to diſturb or prevent, ſince one day only intervened before he was to be the huſband of Celeſtina.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIV.

VAVASOUR, born to a ſplendid fortune, and left by the early death of his parents to the care of guardians, who while they took ſufficient care of his property, had very little influence over his mind and his morals, had never yet formed a wiſh, which it was not immediately in his power to gratify: the growing inclination, therefore, that he found towards Celeſtina, was painful and uneaſy to him, for he had too much honour, and too true a regard for Willoughby, to ſuffer a thought injurious to him to dwell on his mind; and had he been capable of entertaining wiſhes, or forming ſchemes againſt his happineſs, he knew that Celeſtina's attachment to him was not to be ſhaken, and that he ſhould excite her contempt and abhorrence,

rence, inſtead of continuing to enjoy that confidence and regard with which ſhe now favoured him.

But the more hopeleſs his partiality for her was, the more reſtleſs he of courſe became in its encreaſe: for ſeveral days he endeavoured to conquer, or at leaſt to conceal it by redoubling his gaiety: he romped, laughed, and rattled, till his violent ſpirits became even diſtreſſing to Celeſtina: all however would not do; and as he had no notion of enduring any kind of uneaſineſs, while there was a chance of relieving himſelf, he at length reſolved to quit Willoughby, and not to return to him till after he was actually married; and this reſolution he prepared to execute the following morning, which was the preceding one to that which was fixed for the marriage.

"I ſhall leave you this morning, George," ſaid he to Willoughby, as they were at breakfaſt together.

"Leave me!" cried Willoughby in much ſurpriſe: "for what reaſon?"

"Becauſe I hate all formal ceremonies, and have beſides buſineſs elſewhere."

"Ridiculous! ſurely you are not in earneſt?"

"Perfectly ſo, believe me: never more in earneſt in my life. I'll come back to you in a week or ten days, but I poſitively go this very day."

"Thou art a ſtrange fellow, and there is never any telling where to have thee. Did you not promiſe to be father to the brides? What will Celeſtina ſay?"

"Why

"Why probably as you do——that I am a ſtrange fellow."

"You make me uneaſy, Harry," ſaid Willoughby very gravely. "Whimſical and unſettled as you are, it muſt be ſurely ſomething more than mere whim, which urges you to leave me at ſuch a time."

"Not at all," anſwered he gaily: "it is the time in the world you can beſt ſpare me; and upon my ſoul I have buſineſs to do which I have fooliſhly neglected, and which I muſt either go after now or a fortnight hence, when I intend to be with you; and ſo, my dear George, we'll talk no more about it: my ſervants are getting ready, and will be at the door in a minute: oh they are driving round. Well, George, God bleſs you my dear fellow. Give my love to the girls, and tell Celeſtina to ſave me a great piece of bride cake."

Willoughby would again have remonſtrated, but Vavaſour, in his way, ran on rallying him about his marriage, and refuſing to liſten to him, till the curricle was ready; into which he ſtepped, after again promiſing to return in a fortnight, and immediately drove away.

Willoughby, though long accuſtomed to theſe ſtarts of caprice from his thoughtleſs friend, was equally ſurpriſed and diſconcerted at a reſolution for which he could not account: he was far from the remoteſt idea of the real cauſe; and, occupied as his thoughts were by Celeſtina, he inveſtigated not ſo deeply the motives of his friend's actions as at another time he might have done.

On

On the preceding day, moved by his tender reproaches that ſhe had no confidence in his honour, and affected needleſs precaution, Celeſtina had acceded to his wiſhes that ſhe would allow him, as the day was fixed for Thurſday, to fetch her to Alveſtone in the morning of Wedneſday, where Jeſſy was to meet her, and that ſhe would then take her laſt leave of her humble abode on Thorpe Common.

As ſoon, therefore, as Vavafour was gone, he diſpatched Cathcart for Jeſſy, and haſtened himſelf to Celeſtina, who was ready for him. As they journeyed towards the houſe that was henceforth to be their home, Willoughby, with more than uſual tenderneſs in his voice and manner, entered into a more minute detail than he had ever yet done of the plans he had formed for their future life: with the ſanguine hand of youthful hope, he drew a picture of uninterrupted felicity, which Celeſtina involuntarily ſighing, thought too perfect to be realized; and with timid apprehenſion, for which ſhe could not account, and was unwilling to betray, ſhe internally aſked herſelf, wherefore ſhe could expect to deſerve or enjoy bleſſings ſo much ſuperior to the common lot of humanity.

All, however, that might have been to another an alloy to happineſs, was none to her, ſo far as it related only to herſelf. In marrying her, Willoughby had reſigned all proſpect of ever reſtoring his family to the ſplendid fortune and high conſequence poſſeſſed by his anceſtors, nor could he even retrieve the eſtate he had left, or keep up the place he was ſo fond of, but by relin-

relinquiſhing all ſuperfluous expences, and confining himſelf to that mode of life, which was ſome years ſince adopted, but would now be thought below the pretenſions of a man poſſeſſed only of a thouſand a year: in fact Willoughby found, on a cloſe inſpection of his affairs, that by living within that income, he might in about ten years clear, without diſmembering his eſtate. "It is enough for happineſs, my Celeſtina," he would ſay; "it is enough to afford us all the decencies, and all the comforts of life, and to aſſiſt thoſe who may not have either. Oh how little reaſon we ſhall have to envy thoſe who have more." Celeſtina aſſented with her whole heart; and if ever an uneaſy reflection aroſe there for a moment, repreſenting that for her he reſigned the ſplendour and luxury in which he might have lived, ſhe recollected her opinion of the greater part of thoſe who moved amid a ſucceſſion of thoſe luxuries, and aſked herſelf whether there was one among them who was ſo much reſpected by others, or ſo well content with himſelf, as Willoughby would probably be, living as he propoſed. She remembered how often, when ſhe was accuſtomed to ſee nearly many of thoſe, who, by adventitious advantages, dazzle at a diſtance, ſhe had been compelled to aſſent to the truth of that ſevere expreſſion of the ſatiriſt's, which ſays, that it may be ſeen——

"Of how ſmall eſtimation is exorbitant wealth
"In the ſight of God,
"By his beſtowing it on the moſt unworthy
"Of all mortals."

The

The departure of Vavaſour, of which Willoughby had, with ſome marks of regret and ſurpriſe, on his firſt meeting Celeſtina informed her, had given her concern, as it ſeemed to have been a diſappointment to him; but for herſelf, ſhe felt rather relieved by the abſence of a too lively gueſt. There was at times an unguarded vivacity about him, of which ſhe was not always able to check the exceſs; and though ſhe had never any idea of his partiality to her, nor thought him capable of a ſerious attachment to any woman, there had of late been a warmth and earneſtneſs in his manner, which ſhe was afraid of being called prudiſh if ſhe attempted to repreſs, and yet ſhe could not but feel that it was improper to allow it in her preſent ſituation, and would be more ſo when ſhe became the wife of Willoughby.

On their arrival at Alveſtone, the lawyer was ready with the ſettlements: they were immediately executed in the preſence of Cathcart and Jeſſy; and when that unpleaſant ceremony was over, a walk filled up the time till dinner. Nothing was ever ſo gay and happy as Willoughby: Celeſtina was now miſtreſs of his houſe: his happineſs was ſecured almoſt beyond the reach of fate: and ſince only a few hours were to intervene before their marriage, he tenderly chid Celeſtina for her penſive gravity, and endeavoured to engage her thoughts by neceſſary arrangements that he propoſed in the houſe, and by enlarging on thoſe topics which ſhe had liſtened to with ſo much complacency in the morning.

After

After dinner another walk was propoſed; but juſt as they were riſing from table, a ſervant entered with a letter for Willoughby, which he ſaid had been brought expreſs from Exeter.

He broke the ſeal, which, like the hand of the direction, was unknown to him; he ran over the contents haſtily, changing countenance as he read; and then enquiring if the meſſenger waited, haſtily left the room.

Celeſtina, who watched his looks, was alarmed both by them, and his manner of leaving the room. A moment's reflection ſubdued her apprehenſions; but they were preſently renewed and heightened by his ſending to ſpeak with Cathcart; who, after being with him almoſt a quarter of an hour, returned by his directions to inform her, that he was gone on horſeback to Exeter, to meet ſome people who had ſent to him about buſineſs which would admit of no delay: he begged Cathcart to tell her that it would be ſoon diſpatched, and that he ſhould certainly return in a few hours.

Celeſtina knew, from his own account, every circumſtance of his fortune; ſhe knew that except the mortgages on his eſtate, the intereſt of which had been punctually paid, he had no pecuniary claims to anſwer but his debt to Vavaſour: ſhe was equally certain that he had no diſpute with any body, and that therefore it could not be an affair of honour, and ſhe thought it certain, that if Lady Molyneux or any of his relations had been in the neighbourhood, he would have made no myſtery of their arrival: his

his abrupt departure, therefore, without ſeeing her, ſurpriſed and troubled her; and neither her own reaſon, which urged how unlikely it was that any diſagreeable buſineſs ſhould detain him, or the arguments of Cathcart and Jeſſy, could quiet or mitigate the anxiety which every moment of his abſence encreaſed.

Four, five, ſix hours, had now been paſſed by Celeſtina, while it was light, in traverſing the avenue and the road that led towards Exeter; and after it became dark, in liſtening at the door to every noiſe. It was ten o'clock: a ſtill, ſtar-light night: a low wind conveyed now the diſtant murmur of the water-fall in the park, now the voices of men from the village, where every thing ſoon ſunk into repoſe. Neither Cathcart nor Jeſſy could longer diſguiſe their fears, though neither knew what to dread; but while they affected to believe Celeſtina's apprehenſions in a great meaſure groundleſs, their anxious returns to the door to liſten, their reſtleſs inquietude, and various conjectures, convinced her too evidently, that they participated the fears they pretended to condemn.

At length about eleven o'clock, a horſe, or as they were willing to believe, horſes, were heard to come faſt along the road: the park gate opened and ſhut with violence. It was Willoughby they all fondly hoped: all ran out eagerly, impatient to meet him: as the horſeman approached, however, they diſtinguiſhed him not to be Willoughby, but the ſervant who had attended him.

"Where

"Where is your Maſter, Hugh?" ſaid Celeſtina; "is he coming? is he well?"

The man took a letter from his pocket, and anſwered in a dejected tone——"No, Madam, not coming; he ſent me with this letter to Mr. Cathcart."

Celeſtina followed trembling, while Cathcart ran into the hall, and by the light which hung there, read theſe words:——

"Dear Cathcart, come to me immediately.
"I ſhall not return to-night. I know not if——
"But aſſure Celeſtina of my ſafety. Loſe not a
"moment in coming to

"Your's ever,

"G. W."

Swan, Exeter,

Wedneſday night.

THE

THE painful ſuſpenſe Celeſtina had before endured, was happineſs and eaſe in compariſon of the vague but terrible apprehenſions that now ſeized her.

What could detain him againſt his wiſhes? What meant the unfiniſhed ſentence—"I know not if——?" What could he want with Cathcart? and why not diſcloſe the cauſe of his ſtay, and his buſineſs with Cathcart, if it was only an affair of little conſequence, ſince he could not but know how much his ſudden departure muſt alarm her. The note too ſeemed to have been written with a trembling hand; the lines were crooked, and the letters hardly formed, and the paper blotted: all denoted hurry and confuſion, very unlike Willoughby's manner in matters of mere buſineſs; and the indications of ſome impending evil, alarming enough in themſelves, were exaggerated by the terrors, which had now taken entire poſſeſſion of the mind of Celeſtina. Unable to reſtrain her emotions, ſhe ran, hardly knowing whither ſhe went, to the ſtable, where the ſervant who had brought the note was getting ready the horſe on which Cathcart was to go. She eagerly queſtioned the man who was with his maſter? He anſwered that he did not know: that he ſaw nobody with him, but he had heard at the inn, that two ladies had come thither that morning, who had ſent the meſſenger to Alveſtone; that he believed they had been with his maſter, but he did not know, and when his maſter ſpoke to him, and gave him the letter for Mr Cathcart, he was alone, and ſeemed very uneaſy, ſaying however little more to him, than

than to deſire he would make what haſte he could.

This account ſerved only to encreaſe the terrible obſcurity which tormented Celeſtina. A thouſand other queſtions occurred. Were theſe ladies yet at the inn? Did they travel in their own chaiſe? Had they ſervants with them? Hugh could not anſwer the firſt queſtion; but the other two being ſuch as lay more within the reach of his obſervation, he anſwered that there were certainly neither ſervants nor horſes at the inn belonging to any ſtranger when he came away.

Cathcart was by this time ready; and ſeeing the extreme inquietude of Celeſtina, he aſſumed the appearance of tranquillity he was far from feeling, ſaid that it was probably ſome buſineſs relative to Mr. Willoughby's eſtates, which had been overlooked and neglected; that at all events he would be back in a few hours, when it was almoſt certain that if Mr. Willoughby did not return himſelf, he ſhould be commiſſioned fully to acquaint her of the reaſons of his detention, and convince her that her fears for his ſafety were groundleſs: in the mean time he beſought her to endeavour to quiet her ſpirits and to take ſome repoſe.

Cathcart then departed; and Celeſtina, leaning on the arm of Jeſſy, returned to the houſe; but to follow the advice he had given her, was not in her power; the little ſhe had gathered from the ſervant, ſerved to awaken new alarms, not leſs painful, though very different from thoſe which had at firſt aſſailed her: then ſhe had a confuſed

confuſed idea that the abrupt departure of Vavaſour had been occaſioned by ſome miſunderſtanding between them, which had produced a challenge; it was unlikely, but it was not impoſſible: now ſhe gave up that conjecture for another, and ſuppoſed that Willoughby might have formed ſome connection or engagement with ſome woman, who, hearing of his intended marriage, had thus prevented it by urging her prior claim to his hand: this ſuppoſition was, however, more improbable than the other, from his known integrity and unblemiſhed honour, from his long and tender attachment to her, and from the whole tenor of his morals and his conduct; but however unlikely, it was not quite impoſſible; and the anxious and alarmed ſpirit of Celeſtina ran over the remoteſt poſſibilities, but found in all only exchange of anguiſh.

As Cathcart had promiſed to return in a few hours, Celeſtina, certain of not being able to ſleep, would not go to bed; and Jeſſy, who ſhared all her ſolicitude, ſat up with her. As the time approached that Cathcart had named for the probable period of his return, they were again both at the window, and again eagerly liſtening to every noiſe. The ſun aroſe, but diſcovered not the objects of their ſolicitude; and Celeſtina, now unable to reſt within the houſe, beſought Jeſſy to go down with her to the end of the long avenue of elms and into the road, as if the attempt to meet thoſe they expected rendered the ſuſpenſe leſs diſtracting.

Weary

Weary of conjecture, and fatigued both in mind and body, they moved ſlowly and melancholy along: neither of them ſpoke, for neither had any comfort to offer the other. Of the labourers, who were come by this time to their work, they enquired if they had heard of their maſter, or ſeen Mr. Cathcart on the road. But no intelligence could be gained of either. The peaſants, however, alarmed by the queſtions and by the looks of thoſe who aſked them, all eagerly offered to go any where, to do any thing their maſter's ſervice might require, and begged Celeſtina to employ them: but though ſhe had ſeveral times, during the long and anxious night, thought of ſending a meſſenger with a letter to Willoughby, or even, of going herſelf, ſhe now remembered that all the intelligence ſhe could gain from the firſt expedient, ſhe would probably receive from Cathcart before any meſſenger could get to Exeter; and for the ſecond, that it might be diſpleaſing to Willoughby, were ſhe to appear thus prying into his actions and miſtruſtful of his honour.

Nothing, therefore, remained but to bear, with what firmneſs ſhe could, ſuſpenſe which every moment rendered more inſupportably cruel. Hardly conſcious of what ſhe was doing, and inſenſible of perſonal fatigue, ſhe had advanced near a mile beyond the park, and had partly croſſed a ſandy heath, over which the high road lay, when Jeſſy haſtily cried out that Cathcart was coming: he ſaw them at the ſame moment; and haſtening on, leaped from his horſe as ſoon as he came near them.

His

His countenance was little likely to quiet their fears: he was as pale as death, and his lips trembled as he ſpoke to Celeſtina, and aſſured her, in a voice that ſeemed to contradict the words it hardly articulated, that Mr. Willoughby was well, perfectly well, and had authoriſed him to ſay every thing to her that might make her eaſy.

The hurried manner in which he ſpoke this, the impreſſion of uneaſineſs on his countenance, and the improbability that Willoughby ſhould be well and not return himſelf, all ſtruck forcibly on the mind of Celeſtina, and convinced her that ſomething very fatal had happened. "You deceive me, Cathcart," cried ſhe in the wild and tremulous voice of deſpair, "I know you deceive me. Something very dreadful has befallen him: he is dead, or dying: I will go to him, however —I will know the worſt."

Cathcart now took her hands, and with the utmoſt earneſtneſs began again to repeat his aſſurances that Willoughby was not only alive but well. Celeſtina, interrupted him, aſked— "Why then do I not ſee him? why is he detained? and what buſineſs of fatal import could keep him ſo long? Cathcart, I will not, I cannot be deceived: tell me at once what I have to ſuffer, and I will endeavour to bear it; but this incertitude, theſe apprehenſions, I cannot endure another hour, nor another moment.

While this dialogue paſſed, he had taken one of her arms within his, and having made a ſign to Jeſſy to take the other, they led her gently towards Alveſtone park gate. Cathcartwas ſilent for a

moment as if conſidering how he could ſoften the ſhock which it was neceſſary for him to give her; while Celeſtina continued impatiently urging him to tell her the worſt, whatever it might be. "Let me repeat to you, deareſt Madam," ſaid he, "let me repeat to you, that you have nothing to fear for the life of our dear friend; and ſurely whatever other intelligence, I have to impart———"

"Other intelligence!" cried Celeſtina: "you have then ſomething to impart which all my fortitude is required to ſuſtain. Willoughby—— but no! it is impoſſible: he cannot be unworthy —he cannot have cruelly deceived me—it is impoſſible——"

"It is indeed," replied Cathcart, "in my opinion impoſſible for Mr. Willoughby to be guilty of any unworthy action. You, Miſs de Mornay, have, I am convinced, a ſtrength of underſtanding very uncommon—— "

"Cathcart," cried Celeſtina with energy. "this is no time for flattery: prove your opinion of my underſtanding by daring to entruſt me with this fearful ſecret: the knowledge of it cannot give me ſo much pain as your heſitation."

"I would very fain obey you!" replied he. "What then will you ſay if I tell you, that, though I am wholly ignorant of the cauſe of a reſolution ſo extraordinary, ſo unexpected, I am afraid it will be very long before you ſee Willoughby again, and that he is now many miles diſtant from us; though upon my ſoul, by all my hopes here and hereafter, I ſwear that I neither

ther know the motives of his departure nor whither he is gone."

Celeſtina, prepared as ſhe was for ſome heavy blow, found this hideous uncertainty more than ſhe could ſuſtain: that Willoughby ſhould have quitted her, probably for ever, without aſſigning any cauſe, at the very moment they were to be united; that he ſhould not himſelf have ſeen her to have ſoftened the pain this cruel and unaccountable event muſt inflict; that he ſhould not even have written to her, but ſhould, in this abrupt and unfeeling way, abandon her to all the miſery of endleſs conjecture, regret, and diſappointment; were circumſtances ſo unexpected, ſo inſupportable, that her reaſon, which would have ſuſtained her in almoſt any other exigence, ſeemed for a moment to yield to this: ſhe became extremely faint, her knees trembled, a cold dew hung on her forehead, and all the effort ſhe could make was, to ſignify by a motion of her hand that ſhe could go no farther.

They were then more than half a mile from the park gate: but the road along which they were paſſing was worn, and a bank on either ſide offered her a ſeat. Cathcart and Jeſſy ſat down by her, both ſilent, and almoſt as much affected as ſhe was. She leaned her head on Jeſſy, and after a moment a deep ſigh a little relieved her. She turned her eyes mournfully on Cathcart, with an expreſſion he perfectly underſtood, as ſeeming to ſay, tell me all—and I will try to endure it.

"Do not think, I conjure you, my dear Madam," continued he, "that the ardent and ten-

der affection of Mr. Willoughby for you is diminiſhed. Were it poſſible for me to do juſtice to the agonies I ſaw him in, when he told me that a ſtrange neceſſity—a neceſſity he could not explain—compelled him to quit you;—if language could deſcribe the wretchedneſs in which he ſeemed to be involved——"

"Do not deſcribe it, dear Cathcart," ſaid Celeſtina, ſpeaking with difficulty. "I can bear my own miſery, terrible as it is, better than the thoughts of his."

"Mitigate his ſufferings then, amiable Miſs de Mornay," interrupted Cathcart, "by collecting all your fortitude, and remembering how much reliance you ought to have on his honour and his affection; and let me be able to ſay, when I write to him, that this ſad ſeparation has not injured your health, nor your opinion of him: believe me, ſuch is the only intelligence that can adminiſter any conſolation to the torn heart of my noble friend."

"I will try then, Cathcart, that he ſhall have it. You know where to write to him? He expects to hear from you, and from me he wiſhes not to hear?"

"He told me," reaſſumed Cathcart, "that as ſoon as he was able he would write to you himſelf: that he was going immediately to London: whither he ſhould go afterwards he knew not; but that a hateful myſtery——Then he ſtopped; ſeemed to repent having ſaid ſo much; charged me to aſſure you of his everlaſting affection; ſtarted from his ſeat; walked about the room wildly; then again repeated his charge to me that

that I would not leave you, or ſuffer Jeſſy to leave you, but that you would remain at Alveſtone till you heard from him: again he heſitated, doubted, and wringing my hand, aſked me, with diſturbed looks and in a tremulous voice, if ever wretchedneſs equalled his. I would have beſought him to tell me from whence it aroſe; but as if foreſeeing whither my enquiry would tend, he ſtopped me: 'Cathcart,' cried he, 'you know I have great confidence in you, and that I would entruſt you with this fatal myſtery, which I go now to clear up; but I have ſworn never to divulge the cauſe of my——what can I ſay?—Oh! Celeſtina! beſt and lovelieſt of human beings! what muſt be thoſe ſufferings which Willoughby dares not communicate to you!—which your pity and tenderneſs——' Again he broke off, and hurried out of the room. He returned, however, in a few moments, ſomewhat more calm; and alarmed as I had been by his agitation, by the wild eagerneſs of his manner, and the incoherenee of his words, I thought it better to ſoothe him than to attempt to obtain an explanation which it coſt him ſo much even to ſpeak of: I contented myſelf therefore with aſſuring him of my implicit obedience to all his commands, and of my conviction that whatever might be your diſtreſs and anxiety, you would acquieſce in all his wiſhes, and that your reliance on him, your affection for him, would not be ſhaken by this involuntary ſeparation, which, dear Sir, continued I, will ſurely be temporary only; I was going on, but he checked me—'I know not,' ſaid he, with quickneſs—'I know

not—involuntary, God knows it is, but *when* it will end!——Oh Celeſtina! is this the day which I have with ſo much delight anticipated!' He now ſtruck his open hand on his forehead, again ſtarted away from me, and again relapſed into all the agonies of ſorrow.

Celeſtina had not hitherto ſhed a tear. Stunned by the greatneſs and ſingularity of her misfortune, terrified by the evil, which its obſcurity rendered doubly fearful, her ſenſes were for ſome moments ſuſpended; but Willoughby weeping, and in deſpair——Willoughby torn from her by an inviſible and reſiſtleſs hand——awakened all her tenderneſs, and tears filled her eyes, as, with a deep ſigh, ſhe caſt them towards heaven, and with claſped hands, and in a faint voice cried—"Wherever he goes——whatſoever he does—may God protect and bleſs him; and if the remembrance of poor Celeſtina cauſes him any unhappineſs, may he forget her. Indeed, Cathcart," added ſhe, "indeed his happineſs, and not my own, has been always the firſt wiſh of my heart." She would have gone on, but her voice failed her. After a moment's ſilence, however, ſhe ſeemed to have found ſome degree of fortitude and ſtrength——"Let us return to the houſe, my dear Jeſſy," ſaid ſhe, "while I am able, and let us there conſider what it will be right to do."

Cathcart, glad to ſee her more compoſed than he had dared to hope, now again led her forward with the aſſiſtance of Jeſſy. But their help ſeemed no longer requiſite: ſhe hurried on with as much quickneſs, as if ſhe expected her ſuſpenſe to

to be terminated on her reaching the houſe; where ſhe arrived, out of breath, trembling, and agitated. She ſpoke not, but hurried through the hall into the library, where they uſually ſat; and there the firſt object that ſtruck her was Mr. Thorold, the clergyman who had been engaged to marry them, the ſame who had, at the requeſt of Willoughby, ſo effectually exerted his zeal and friendſhip in introducing Jeſſy Woodburn to her grandfather, and of whoſe ſociety Willoughby was very fond.

He laid down his book on the entrance of Celeſtina, and prepared to ſalute her with cheerful congratulations, for it was not now more than eight o'clock; he had put his horſe into the ſtable himſelf as was his cuſtom, and walked into the library, where he had been ſome time expecting Willoughby, and began to wonder, as he was a very early riſer, at his delay.

All ideas of bridal feſtivity however were driven from his mind the moment he beheld the countenance of Celeſtina. "My dear Miſs De Mornay," cried he, approaching her, "are you ill?——has any thing happened?" Celeſtina, ſtruck by the ſight of him, could not anſwer, but ſat down in the firſt chair ſhe found, and Cathcart, ſeeing how greatly ſhe was affected, took Mr. Thorold by the arm and led him into the garden.

Celeſtina in the mean time leaning againſt Jeſſy, who hung weeping over her, attempted again to recover her reſolution and compoſure. She ſighed deeply. "Jeſſy, my love," ſaid ſhe, when ſhe could command her voice, "I wiſh to

return to Thorpe Heath. Methinks I am now an intruder here: ſend, therefore for ſome conveyance for me; and think for me, my dear friend, for I fear I am incapable of judging for myſelf."

The timid and ſoft tempered Jeſſy was but little likely to direct or ſupport her. "Let us, deareſt Madam," ſaid ſhe, "ſpeak to Cathcart again before you take any reſolution: let us hear Mr. Thorold's opinion."

"Do you then attend them for that purpoſe," replied Celeſtina, "for myſelf, I cannot hear them, I ſhould I think be better were I left alone for a few moments: I will go, therefore, to my own room——my own room? alas! I have none in this houſe! Let me go, however, Jeſſy, to that which I uſed to call mine. I would recall my diſſipated and diſtracted ſpirits, I would acquire ſome degree of reaſon and reſignation; and ſince wretchedneſs is now irrevocably mine, I would teach this rebellious heart to ſubmit to it."

Jeſſy anſwered not; and Celeſtina riſing, walked ſlowly through the hall, leaning on her friend's arm, towards the ſtair-caſe. As ſhe paſſed, ſhe ſaw Willoughby's hat and gloves on the table where he generally placed them; a book he had been reading to her, as they ſauntered in the garden the preceding day, lay by them: Celeſtina ſtarted as if a ſpectre had met her: the painful contraſt between her preſent ſituation and that of a few hours before ſtruck her forcibly: ſhe ſhuddered, and ſnatching up the book, haſtened

haſtened away with it, as if ſhe apprehended ſomebody would take it from her.

When they reached the door of the apartment which ſhe had choſen for her dreſſing-room, ſhe turned to Jeſſy, and with a melancholy and forced compoſure bade her adieu for an hour. "You will go, my dear," ſaid ſhe, "to Mr. Thorold and Mr. Cathcart, and ſay to the former, with my compliments, that I will endeavour to ſee him if he will be kind enough to ſtay till ten o'clock and breakfaſt here, and tell him too, that I depend much on his friendly advice, and that it cannot be given to any being who wants it more, or will be more ſenſible of its value."

CHAPTER XV.

THE reflections of Celeſtina when ſhe was alone were full of bitterneſs and anguiſh. It was in vain that ſhe wearied herſelf with conjectures on the cauſe of her misfortune: ſhe could find no probability in any that preſented themſelves. It could not be caprice, nor that cruel delight which men have ſometimes taken in wantonly inflicting pain, and torturing diſappointment the hearts they have taught to love them, for of ſuch conduct ſhe knew Willoughby to be incapable; it could not be a diſpute with Vavaſour or any other young man, for ſuch, however alarming, muſt ſoon have been decided; nor could it be any pecuniary difficulty that had thus divided them, ſince Willoughby, in talking over their future proſpects, had related to her the ſituation of his fortune

fortune with the utmoſt clearneſs and preciſion; it could hardly be a prior matrimonial engagement, for from his infancy he had loved her, he had repeatedly told her that he never had the leaſt partiality for any other woman, and he was truth and candour itſelf; it could not be any impediment raiſed by the Caſtlenorths, for however great might be their diſpleaſure and diſappointment, they had no power over Willoughby's actions; and he did not love them well enough to make it probable that their perſuaſions or remonſtrances could induce him to give up the favourite project of his life, and abandon her whom he ſo paſſionately loved, to diſgrace and miſery.

Whatever was the cauſe, however, of the ſudden reſolution he had taken, miſery was certain: ſhe obſerved that in the dialogue which Cathcart repeated as having paſſed between him and Willoughby, no mention was made of a probability of his return—no hope thrown out, that their union was rather ſuſpended than put an end to. All was dark and comfortleſs; and in the myſtery which ſurrounded the whole affair, there was ſomething of terror and apprehenſion which ſeemed more inſupportable than the certainty of any evil except Willoughby's death.

Cathcart, however, had given her a motive to ſupport her courage, in telling her that nothing but the knowledge of her bearing his loſs without injury to her health or her affection for him, could ſoothe or diminiſh the anguiſh with which Willoughby was himſelf oppreſſed. "Let me endeavour then," ſaid ſhe, "to give him this ſatisfaction, as the laſt proof I ſhall perhaps ever be

be able to give him of my tender, my unalterable love. Condemned as I am to everlaſting regret, daſhed from the ſummit of happineſs to long and hopeleſs ſorrow for the reſt of my life, let my reſolution in ſuffering with calmneſs, ſhew that I ſhould have deſerved the happineſs which heaven once ſeemed to have ſettled as my lot. Heaven only knows wherefore I am condemned to loſe and lament it."

The ſolemn promiſe which Willoughby had owned his mother had aſked and received of him in her laſt moments now occurred to her. "Perhaps it is for the intended breach of that promiſe," cried ſhe, "that we are puniſhed: yet from whence? the ear that heard it, the anxious maternal heart that obtained it, are duſt! My benefactreſs comes not from the grave to claim it: it was known only to her, to her ſon, and to me. Who is there who could enforce it now, and to whom would Willoughby liſten, after obviating all the objections I urged againſt its violation?"

This fatal promiſe, however, had always hung heavy on the heart of Celeſtina, even in her happieſt moments, and ſhe ſeemed now to be paying the price of having ever conſented to break it. Still, ſtill the inexplicable myſtery remained; and the hand from which the blow came, that had divided her and Willoughby was equally hid in obſcurity.

When a misfortune, however heavy, is certain, the mind ſinks reſiſtleſs beneath it; and feeling all remedy ineffectual, it ceaſes all attempt to apply any: but this was not the caſe with Celeſtina:

leſtina: while the cauſe of her being torn from Willoughby was unknown, there appeared a poſſibility that it might be removed; and though he had held out no ſuch hope in his converſation with Cathcart, her reaſon now ſeized this idea as her only reſource. He had beſought her to bear their ſeparation with patience; he had hopes then ſurely that it would end: he had entreated her not to forget her affection for him; ſurely he had expectations then that he might again claim it. Her ſanguine temper encouraged theſe faint rays of comfort, which a few moments before ſeemed to be extinguiſhed for ever. The firſt ſhock was paſſed; the tears ſhe had ſhed had relieved her overburthened heart, and ſhe prepared with ſome degree of ſerenity to go down to Mr. Thorold, Cathcart, and Jeſſy, and to conſult with them on what ſhe ought to do.

When ſhe again entered the room, the little group which were aſſembled in it, their melancholy and anxious looks, and the different expectations with which their meeting had been appointed, combined to effect her, and to ſhake the little reſolution ſhe had with ſo much difficulty acquired: ſhe ſat down, however, and Mr. Thorold, with a degree of fatherly tenderneſs, approached her and took her hand.

"My dear young friend," ſaid the excellent man, "this dignified compoſure is worthy of your excellent underſtanding. Do you think me deſerving the honour of being your adviſer, if, in the preſent ſtate of circumſtances, you feel that you want one?"

"I do

"I do indeed ſeverely feel," replied Celeſtina faultering, "the neceſſity of a friend who is able to adviſe me; and where, dear Sir, can I find one ſo equal to it, if you will but undertake the trouble."

"Well then," replied Mr. Thorold, "we will not go over the occurrences that have happened, nor attempt to account for them: ſome unforeſeen events have divided you and my friend Willoughby, and I am very ſure, that whatever they are, they muſt, if irretrievable, embitter the reſt of his life: he wiſhes you, as I underſtand from Mr. Cathcart, to remain here at leaſt till you have letters from him. Do you intend to do ſo?"

"I hardly know," anſwered Celeſtina faintly, "what I ought to do."

"It ſeems to me," ſaid Mr. Thorold, "that whatever reaſon has had ſo much influence on him as to compel him to quit you, ſhould render your abode in his houſe improper."

"I will return then, Sir, ſince that is your opinion, to the lodging I left at Thorpe Heath."

"That will be very melancholy and unpleaſant to you I fear."

"It certainly will: but what have I to do now but to learn to ſuffer? Local circumſtances will have little power to add to the ſorrow I muſt endure, while uncertain of what is become of Mr. Willoughby: doubting whether I may not have been the cauſe that ſome evil has befallen him, and ſure of nothing—but that I muſt be wretched if I never ſee him again."

"I would

"I would very fain comfort without deceiving you if I could. *I hope you will* ſee him again: yet nothing ſurely but ſome very extraordinary event could have taken him from you; but you hear that he was well—that he promiſed to write to you: it is poſſible that letter may explain what all our conjectures can do little in clearing up: let us leave them, therefore; and do you, my dear Miſs de Mornay, reſolve to fulfil his parting injunctions as far as prudence will permit. I cannot ſay I approve of your ſtaying here, or of your going back to indulge your uneaſineſs in the mournful ſecluſion of your cottage; let me propoſe therefore a middle way, by which you will receive this expected letter without quitting the neighbourhood, and be ready to obey any wiſh of our dear Willoughby, without receiving it at Thorpe Heath, where you would have nobody to aſſiſt you in its execution. Will you go home with me?"

Celeſtina, who already felt the value of ſuch a friend as ſhe ſeemed to have acquired in Mr. Thorold, and who foreſaw that ſhe muſt loſe Jeſſy, who could not ſtay long from her grandfather, would willingly have embraced this offer. She knew that Willoughby had the warmeſt friendſhip for Mr. Thorold, and that he would probably approve of ſuch a propoſal; but ſhe was acquainted with his wife, and dreaded to intrude herſelf into a family where ſhe might find only the maſter of it diſpoſed to receive her: ſhe objected therefore to the trouble ſhe ſhould give, and to the impropriety of introducing herſelf, thus unaſked, to the acquaintance of his lady; but

but Mr. Thorold obviated all her objections, aſſured her ſhe ſhould have an apartment to herſelf, and that his wife would conſider her as his daughter, his daughter as her ſiſter; and Celeſtina, who could not think without pain of going alone to Thorpe Heath, which ſhe had left with proſpects ſo very different, and from whence her books and clothes had been removed, conſented to go with Mr. Thorold, and to remain with him at leaſt till ſhe heard from Willoughby.

It was then ſettled that at leaſt part of the original errand which had brought Mr. Thorold to Alveſtone ſhould be completed, and that Cathcart and Jeſſy ſhould be married, ſince her father was already waiting to give her away, and ſince Cathcart was to remain at Alveſtone by the particular directions of Willoughby on their parting. Celeſtina could not be preſent at the ceremony, but while it was performing prepared herſelf with as much reſolution as ſhe could for her little journey. When they returned from the altar, ſhe kiſſed in ſilence the weeping Jeſſy, who clung round her unable to bid her adieu: ſhe recommended to Cathcart the cloſeſt adherence to every injunction laid on him by Willoughby, and beſought him to come himſelf over to her with the expected letter as ſoon as it arrived; and then with faultering ſteps went to the chaiſe which was in waiting for her by Mr. Thorold's orders. He placed himſelf by her; and ſhe was thus removed, probably as ſhe thought for ever, from the houſe, of which, only a few hours before, ſhe conſidered herſelf as the fortunate miſtreſs.

As ſhe paſſed along the avenue, the bench under one of the great elms, where ſhe had ſo often ſat with Willoughby in their childhood, and where only a few days before he had been recalling thoſe delightful times to her recollection, ſtruck her moſt: it looked like a monument to the memory of loſt happineſs! As the great gate of the park ſhut after the carriage, ſhe felt herſelf exiled for ever from the only ſpot in the world that contained any object intereſting to her; and though little diſpoſed to think of poetry, almoſt involuntarily repeated—

" O unexpected ſtroke, worſe than of death,
" Muſt I then leave thee paradiſe? thus leave
" Thee native ſoil, theſe happy walks and ſhades!"

Mr. Thorold, to whom ſorrow was ſacred, attempted not to call off her thoughts from their preſent mournful employment; but glad to ſee that her ſorrow broke not out in thoſe violent and convulſive expreſſions which many women would have given way to, he contented himſelf with adminiſtering to her in ſilence all the offices of friendſhip; and when they arrived at his houſe, which was about five miles from Alveſtone, he got out and went in firſt to prepare his family for the reception of their unexpected viſitor. After a few moments he returned, and aſſured her that both Mrs. Thorold and his daughter would be happy to ſee her, and think themſelves

themſelves honoured by her abode with them; "but," added he, "perhaps you had rather go to your own chamber than be introduced immediately to ſtrangers." Celeſtina had already repented of having accepted Mr. Thorold's offer, however friendly it was, and felt that in her preſent ſtate of mind the moſt forlorn ſolitude would have been better for her than the reſtraint ſhe muſt unavoidably ſubmit to, and the enquiries that, if not by words, the looks of all who ſaw her would make into the cauſe of the ſtrange revolution that had happened in her circumſtances: but it was now too late to retreat, and ſhe determined to go through at once a ceremony, the delay of which would not render it leſs diſtreſſing.

She anſwered, therefore, with more ſteadineſs of voice than could be expected, that ſhe could not too ſoon avail herſelf of Mrs. Thorold's kindneſs, and was immediately introduced to her and her only unmarried daughter.

Mrs. Thorold was what the world agrees to call a very good ſort of woman, but one of thoſe who are beſt deſcribed by negatives; ſhe had no poſitive failings, but a ſort of feminine pride, which made her very anxious that none of her neighbours, at leaſt none of the rank of private gentlewomen, ſhould have handſomer clothes, or better furniture, or a nicer houſe; and while ſhe carefully guarded her own dignity, ſhe indulged ſomewhat too much curioſity in enquiring into the minuteſt particular by which the conſequence of others could be diminiſhed or encreaſed.

Mr.

Mr. Thorold, whoſe ſtrong underſtanding taught him to ſee and bear her foibles, had taken the utmoſt pains to check in his daughters a propenſity to imitate them. The three elder had been married ſome years, and were ſettled in the neighbourhood of London. Arabella, the youngeſt, was now about two and twenty, rather pretty in her perſon, and pleaſing in her manners: with much of her father's ſenſe, ſhe had a little of the vanity of her mother; but it had taken another turn: though ſhe dreſſed faſhionably, and her ſiſters always took care, by ſending her the neweſt modes from London, to enable her to give the *ton* in that remote country, ſhe piqued herſelf leſs on that advantage than on being reckoned extremely accompliſhed. In conſequence of this rage, ſhe played on ſeveral kinds of inſtruments mechanically, for ſhe had no ear, and ſung in a feigned voice, for nature had denied her a natural one. In languages ſhe was more ſucceſsful: under the inſtructions of her father ſhe had early been taught Latin, and that knowledge facilitated her acquiring the French and Italian, which ſhe wrote and underſtood better than ſhe ſpoke them: ſhe took likeneſſes in crayons; painted landſcapes in oil; and the apartments were furniſhed with her worſted works and embroidery.

Celeſtina had hardly gone through the firſt ceremonies of her reception than ſhe found a relief from the inquiſitive looks of the mother and daughter, in admiring theſe performances. "You do my trifling productions a great deal of honour," ſaid Miſs Thorold, "and your praiſe cannot

cannot fail of being very gratifying to me, as I underſtand you are yourſelf ſo extremely accompliſhed."

"Indeed," anſwered Celeſtina, "you have been miſinformed. I can boaſt of no ſuch advantage: but I am extremely fond of muſic and of drawing, and uſed to pleaſe a very partial friend by attempting them: ſince her death, my time has paſſed in a very unſettled way, and I have now no motive to tempt me to recover what in that deſultory life I have loſt of the little I knew."

Miſs Thorold, who had heard Celeſtina repreſented as excelling, was not ſorry to find ſhe poſſeſſed no ſuch very great advantages over her; and Celeſtina, to whom any thing was preferable to converſation, preſſing her to ſit down to the harpſichord, ſhe complied with that air of confidence which the certainty of excelling gives; and till dinner ſhe continued to play ſonatas and leſſons, all of which Celeſtina failed not to applaud, though ſhe had ſo little idea of what ſhe heard, that ſhe could not have aſſigned one to its proper compoſer: her thoughts were fled after Willoughby; and from the ſtrange reverſe ſhe had experienced, nothing had power to detach them. Dinner, tea, and ſupper, at length were over; the preſence of Mr. Thorold prevented his wife from aſking queſtions which were every moment riſing to her lips; and Celeſtina was permitted to retire to her own room at an early hour. The extreme fatigue ſhe had ſuffered the night before, and the ſolicitude of ſpirit ſhe had endured for ſo many hours, had ſo exhauſted nature

nature that ſhe ſunk into ſlumber; but it was diſturbed and broken by hideous dreams. In the morning, however, ſhe found herſelf better: her mind had not yet recovered from its conſternation, but ſhe could now think of all that had happened with more ſteadineſs. In the letter ſhe expected from Willoughby, ſhe had ſomething to look forward to, which might alleviate but could not encreaſe her anxiety, as whatever cleared up the myſtery would, ſhe thought, be a relief to her, and certainty, however painful, ſhe was ſure ſhe could endure better than wild conjectures and terrifying ſuſpenſe.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XVI.

ALL the following day paſſed without any tidings of Cathcart, in ſearch of whom the anxious eyes of Celeſtina were continually turned towards the window. Mr. Thorold went out to his farm and among his pariſhioners in his uſual way, and had charged his wife to let Celeſtina be miſtreſs of her time, and not to importune her with queſtions, or even with converſation: to Arabella alſo he had given the ſame injunctions: but the native politeneſs of Celeſtina had made both the ladies believe ſhe was pleaſed by their converſation and intereſted in their concerns, and to avoid the appearance of rudeneſs or ſingularity, now forced herſelf into ſome degree of attention to their endeavours to entertain her, liſtened to the details Mrs. Thorold gave of the affairs of the neighbourhood, and gave her daughter her opinion

opinion of the moſt elegant mixture of colours in a work-bag ſhe was compoſing for one of her ſiſters, heard with patient politeneſs a long poem, written by young Thorold, who was now at Oxford, and aſſented to the juſtice of Arabella's complaints, that there was very little rational ſociety in the country, that every body now forſook their diſtant ſeats to paſs their ſummers at ſome watering-place, and that unleſs one could enter into the amuſements of an inferior circle, there was to be found in the country no amuſement at all.

So paſſed the long long day, and another and another in the ſame manner, relieved by nothing but the ſilent though tender ſympathy with which Mr. Thorold himſelf ſeemed to enter into the feelings of his fair, unhappy gueſt. He looked at her with eyes that told her all the concern her ſituation gave him; and appeared hurt that both his wife and daughter, though they behaved to her with all the attention and kindneſs poſſible, ſeemed not to underſtand, that on a mind like hers, in its preſent ſituation, the common occurrences of life could not be obtruded but to pain and fatigue.

He however ſpoke not to them, of what, he feared, they had not delicacy of feeling enough to comprehend; but knowing of the expected letter from Willoughby, he became towards the noon of the fourth day almoſt as anxious for its arrival, and almoſt as uneaſy at its long delay, as Celeſtina herſelf.

Her

Her ſolicitude was by that time become inſupportable. She could no longer conceal it under the appearance of attending to her hoſts; but took the opportunity of Mrs. Thorold's being engaged in domeſtic buſineſs, and Arabella at her muſic, to ſteal into the garden; where ſhe hid herſelf in a ſort of alcove cut in an hedge of holly and other evergreens that bounded the garden towards the road, and there gave way to the tormenting apprehenſions that corroded her heart.

It was now Tueſday: Willoughby had been gone ſince the preceding Wedneſday evening; and had he gone to London immediately, and written from thence as he promiſed, the letter muſt long ſince have reached Cathcart by the return of the poſt: but ſhe knew that unleſs he was greatly changed, it was not to the poſt he would entruſt the conveyance of a letter on which her exiſtence perhaps depended; the delay therefore aggravated all the terrors ſhe felt; but another day paſt, and ſhe was ſtill obliged to endure them. To diſguiſe her diſtreſs however was impracticable; and without hoping to impoſe upon her friends by ſo common an artifice, ſhe was at length compelled to ſay, that ſhe had an head-ach which was very ſevere, unleſs when ſhe was in the open air; and that ſhe was rendered by it quite incapable of converſation.

Having thus obtained the liberty of wandering alone in the garden, ſhe paſſed there the whole morning of Wedneſday: ſometimes reflecting with the bittereſt regret on the different proſpects

pects which were before her on the Wedneſday of the preceding week, and ſometimes bewildering herſelf in conjectures, on the cauſe of their having thus vaniſhed from her.

Spring had within that period made a rapid progreſs; but Celeſtina no longer heeded the beauties that ſurrounded her: hers was now that ſtate of mind when——

"'Tis nought but gloom around the darken'd Sun
"Loſes his light; the roſy-boſom'd Spring
"To weeping Fancy pines, and yon bright arch,
"Contracted, bends into a duſky vault:
"All Nature fades extinct——"*

Even flowers, of which ſhe was paſſionately fond, had loſt the influence they once had over her fancy. She ſaw them not; or ſeeing them, only recollected that Willoughby had ſhewn her at Alveſtone a bed of ſuch hyacinths, whoſe bloom and fragrance he had fondly anticipated, knowing how much ſhe delighted in them: ſhe remembered with a ſigh each particular leaf and bloſſom that compoſed the laſt noſegay he gathered for her, on the morning of that day, when they were divided, never, as ſhe now feared—to meet again!

Such were her ſad recollections, as, hardly knowing what ſhe did, ſhe traverſed the graſs

* Thomſon.

walk, which was divided by a hedge of evergreens from the road. Her mournful reverie was interrupted by the ſound of horſes feet. She flew to the gate: it was Cathcart! who on perceiving her, threw himſelf from his horſe and gave her the long expected letter, which ſhe received with ſuch marks of extreme agitation, that Cathcart, afraid ſhe would fall, left his horſe to find its way to the ſtable, and came to ſupport her.

She leaned on his arm, attempting to ſpeak, and after a moment's pauſe ſaid—"Cathcart, you have had a letter alſo!"

"I have."

"Before I have courage to open my own, tell me—is Willoughby well? and are there hopes of our ſeeing him again?"

"He is well," anſwered Cathcart; but of ſeeing him again he gives me no hopes: to you, perhaps, he may be, and I hope is more explicit."

Celeſtina ſtaid not to reply; but hurrying as well as ſhe was able to her own room, tore open her letter, which was in theſe words:

London, April 3, 1788.

"What muſt be the miſery the man endures, who only a few days ſince had the immediate proſpect of calling Celeſtina his, and who is now compelled not only to leave her, but to leave her uncertain whether he may ever

" ever again dare to entertain that hope—whe-
" ther he ſhall ever ſee her more!
" How I have loved you, Celeſtina,—how I
" ſtill love you—I ſurely need not repeat. This
" paſſion you well know—

" Grew with my growth, and ſtrengthen'd with my
ſtrength :"

" you will not therefore believe that any circum-
" ſtance can diminiſh———any time efface it.
" Yet ſuch are the barriers that may be between
" us, that perhaps I may never dare again to ſee
" you; or only when I have ſubmitted to the
" dreadful ſacrifice required of me, and given my
" hand to one to whom my heart muſt ever be
" a ſtranger: and yet, Celeſtina, if to this I ever
" do ſubmit, it will only be to enable me to place
" you in the ſituation you deſerve as to fortune,
" and becauſe it matters not, if I cannot paſs
" my life with you, with whom it may be my
" deſtiny to paſs it; for then, it muſt in every
" event be equally unhappy. Celeſtina! I am
" aware of the appearance my conduct muſt have
" in your eyes; aware of it without having the
" power to explain it. I have ſworn that I will
" not unveil this fatal myſtery till I either can
" ſee you, with all thoſe delicious hopes *un-*
" *empoiſoned* that were ſo lately mine, or till I
" have learned to regard you——not with leſs
" affection, for that is impoſſible, but with——
" I bewilder myſelf——I know not what I would
" ſay—only let this be underſtood as my mean-

" ing, that wherever I may be, or whatever I
" may become, my fondeſt affections, my love,
" my eſteem, muſt be yours. It is more than
" probable that I ſhall go abroad; and you, Celeſ-
" tina, whither will you go? Suffer me to name
" my wiſhes, though I hardly dare hope you
" will comply with them——Why ſhould you
" not ſtay at Alveſtone? If *ever I return to it*,
" you will be its miſtreſs; if I never return, you
" might find a melancholy pleaſure———But
" again I am wandering from my point: I will
" not dictate to you, my lovely friend, I, who
" am incapable of judging what I ought to do
" for myſelf; for in the midſt of my reflections
" a thouſand bitter poſſibilities diſtract me: Ce-
" leſtina may renounce me as unworthy of her;
" may learn to deſpiſe me, or what is yet more
" dreadful, ſhe may learn to love another. Oh!
" Celeſtina! ſhould this ever happen—ſhould
" you ever give that heart, which it was the glo-
" ry of my life to poſſeſs, to another!——and
" yet, ſituated as I may find myſelf, it may per-
" haps be —— But I muſt conclude while I am
" able, and call off my thoughts from myſelf,
" to promote Celeſtina's future comforts, if I can
" yet contribute to it, who have perhaps been its
" deſtroyer.

" Do not write to me. Expreſſions of your
" anxiety and regret I cannot bear. It is as
" much as I can now do to keep my ſenſes. Gra-
" cious heaven! that ever I ſhould ſay to Celeſ-
" tina, do not write to me!

" Cathcart

" Cathcart has my directions how to act in all " pecuniary matters at Alveſtone, and to ſtay in " the houſe till he takes poſſeſſion of his own, " which I ſuppoſe will be as ſoon as old Win- " nington dies: then he will continue to ſuper- " intend the farm, and to receive the rents, out " of which I have directed him to pay you fifty " guineas every quarter, and to anſwer any far- " ther demands that you may make upon him: " and you muſt not, Celeſtina, refuſe this; for " remember that the maſter of the whole fortune " ſhould now have been your's, and that you " have a right to this trifle——perhaps to much " more.

" But if theſe reaſons are inſufficient to con- " quer your reluctance, remember, Celeſtina, " that Willoughby, the unhappy Willoughby aſks " it of you, as the greateſt alleviation his wretch- " edneſs now admits of.

" Wherever you are, let Cathcart give me " conſtant information; and whenever I can tell " you that the weight which now preſſes on my " heart is removed, I will write——write! no " I will then fly to my Celeſtina from the extre- " mity of the earth. Perhaps I may now be in " a few days on the ſea; but I go no farther but " to the South of Europe. Celeſtina, it would " be a very great comfort to me to hear from " Cathcart, before I go, what you intend to do: " it would be a ſtill greater to know that you " determine to remain at leaſt this ſummer at " Alveſtone: but you are now with a moſt ex- " cellent man, who is capable of adviſing you: " in him, Celeſtina, you will have a friend and " protector.

" Oh! why is it my lot to refer you to ano-
" ther for protection, when to be your friend,
" your lover, your huſband, was ſo lately the
" firſt hope, as it has ever been the firſt wiſh of
" my exiſtence. But I am running again into
" uſeleſs repetition. Celeſtina, if I ever ſeemed
" worthy of your regard, give not away haſtily
" thoſe affections which were mine! If ever I
" can claim them again—we may be happy; if
" not—but I cannot finiſh the ſentence—I know
" not what I would write, nor am I able to read
" over what I have written. May God bleſs and
" protect you! Adieu, deareſt Celeſtina!

" GEORGE WILLOUGHBY."

Celeſtina read over this letter the firſt time in ſuch perturbation, that except a general notion that notwithſtanding Willoughby had *involuntarily* left her they ſhould meet no more, ſhe had very little idea of its contents.

Her's were ſenſations of anguiſh which no appeal to friendſhip, no participation of her ſentiments with another, could mitigate or appeaſe. Cathcart knew no more of the motives of Willoughby's conduct than ſhe did herſelf; Mr. Thorold was equally ignorant; and to neither of them could ſhe look for conſolation. She tried to recover her compoſure; ſhe a ſecond time read the letter; it grew more and more inexplicable; and after having anxiouſly waited for it ſo many days, its arrival ſeemed now only either to embarraſs her with new conjectures, or to torment her with apprehenſions of his marrying Miſs Fitz-Hayman,

Hayman, for to that the close of the first sentence evidently alluded. Nothing but the natural strength of her understanding could have supported her under the first tumultuous sensations of redoubled consternation and wild conjecture, which now assailed her. The longer she studied the letter, the more impossible she found any explanation of Willoughby's conduct: still the assurances of his unshaken attachment sweetened the bitterness of her destiny; he was living; he still loved her; her situation, therefore, however uneasy, was not desperate; and, as the first astonishment at the incomprehensible contents of a letter, which was expected to clear up every doubt, subsided, she saw less cause of despondence, and again she examined every separate paragraph, trying to extract from all that would bear it, something to cherish that hope, without which her existence would have been insupportable.

Every request of Willoughby had with her the force of a command; but that he made in regard to her continuing at Alveston was so worded, as if he hardly himself thought she ought to comply with it. The impropriety of it appeared evident; but in every other instance she determined to be governed by his wishes, and as far as was now in her power to contribute to his satisfaction by affording him all the consolation that depended upon her. Of the pleasure of living for a beloved object, though perhaps personally disunited for ever, of believing that wherever he was, her ease and happiness were ever in his thoughts, she was fully sensible; and she now found in it a

conſolation ſo ſoothing to her mind, that ſhe was ſoon enabled to return to Cathcart, who waited for her in the parlour, with more compoſure than on her leaving him it was likely ſhe would ſoon obtain. She found herſelf unequal in entering on a diſcuſſion of the letter, which ſhe gave Cathcart to read; and on his returning it in ſilence, but with a look ſufficiently expreſſive of his aſtoniſhment, ſhe told him, that nothing remained but for them to fulfil as nearly as poſſible all the injunctions of Willoughby. "He deſires me not to write to him," ſaid ſhe. "Even in that I ſhall, with whatever reluctance, obey him at preſent, and ſo I certainly ſhall in what relates to following the advice of Mr. Thorold. A little time will be neceſſary before I can fix on any plan of life: but as my dear Willoughby expects to hear of me from you, tell him that I bear our ſeparation, cruel as it is, with fortitude and calmneſs, convinced as I am that our connection is not broken by any cauſe that ought to make me bluſh that it had ever been intended." She ſtopped a moment to recover her voice, which faultered and moſt failed, and then added—"No, Cathcart, whatever has divided us, I have the firmeſt reliance on Willoughby's honour."

"And on his love," ſaid Cathcart, "you may, dear Madam, with equal firmneſs rely: and though theſe perfect convictions render this ſtrange ſeparation more wonderful, they will I truſt ſuſtain your courage through it—I ſay through it, becauſe I am almoſt certain it will be of no long duration."

"Ah!

« Ah! Cathcart!" cried Celeſtina mournfully, « I would I could think ſo! But it is indeed very fruitleſs and very painful to enter again on theſe bewildering conjectures, in which, as there is no end, there is little uſe: and I have need of all my ſpirits to enable me to ſupport an evil, for which I cannot; I will not therefore waſte them in gueſſing or lamenting but employ them to obey him to whom my heart muſt, in every change of circumſtance, and though I were certain never more to ſee him, be fondly and faithfully devoted. Tell him ſo, my good friend: tell him how well I bear this ſevere blow, more ſevere as coming from an unknown hand; and aſſure him that if he will allow me to write to him, I will not diſtreſs him by uſeleſs complaints, or aggravate his ſorrow by repreſenting my own."

Again ſhe ſtopped; while Cathcart expreſſed his admiration of her juſt and noble reſolutions; and after a moment, finding the exertion too much for her, ſhe added haſtily—" tell him thus much, Cathcart, in the letter you will of courſe write to him this afternoon; and tell him that your next letter ſhall inform him, if it is ſtill uneaſy to him to receive a letter from me, of the arrangements I will make under the guidance of Mr. Thorold for my future life: but ſay, that they will be ſuch as will render his generous intentions, as to pecuniary matters needleſs. I would fain explain my thoughts in that reſpect; but in truth I am not able juſt now. Some hours of reflection will be neceſſary to me. Farewel, therefore, dear Cathcart, for this morning; I ſhall of courſe ſee you again in a few days."

Cathcart aſſured her he would be with her again the following Friday; or the intervening day, if he received any new intelligence from Willoughby. She then charged him with many kind wiſhes and remembrances to Jeſſy, who was now, he told her, ſo confined by her grandfather that ſhe could not get to her, and then took his leave to return to Alveſtone, and execute the wiſhes of Willoughby by giving him a minute detail of all that had paſſed with Celeſtina.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. Thorold, who was informed that Celeſtina had received letters from Willoughby, felt a true friendly impatience to know their contents: but feeling alſo how much his lovely gueſt muſt in any event be agitated, he not only forbore to intrude upon her with any enquiries himſelf, but in order that ſhe might not ſuffer even from the looks of his family, which he knew could not fail to expreſs ſolicitude ariſing from leſs generous motives, he ſent her up a note to her own apartment, in which he begged ſhe would not come down to dinner, to put herſelf, through form, into any ſituation that might be in any degree painful. This exemption was particularly gratifying to her, as the younger Thorold was this day expected at dinner, and was to remain at home for ſome weeks; and his elder

elder brother, a Captain in the army, who had been ſome time in Ireland, was to meet him in the evening.

Celeſtina was unfit for company, and above all, the company of ſtrangers; and again ſhe regretted that in the firſt unſettled tumult of her ſpirits ſhe had agreed to Mr. Thorold's propoſal, inſtead of going back to the lodgings ſhe had formerly inhabited: ſhe was now, however, compelled to remain where ſhe was, till ſhe could determine, with the advice of Mr. Thorold, whither to go. She thought it probable that he might wiſh her to remain with him; but to this, except his friendly regard for her, and the advantage of being near Cathcart and Jeſſy, ſhe had no inducement; and wherever ſhe was, ſhe determined it ſhould not be as a mere viſitor for any length of time, but that ſhe would pay for her board. Again the quiet and liberty of her cottage on the heath recurred to her; but when ſhe enjoyed that quiet, her heart had not undergone thoſe viciſſitudes of happineſs and miſery, which had now, ſhe greatly feared, excluded tranquillity from her boſom for ever; what had then afforded her a ſpecies of melancholy pleaſure, the diſtant view of a ſpot in Alveſtone Park, would now ſerve only to render her more unhappy, and to encourage that tendency to repine, which her reaſon told her ſhe ſhould, both on Willoughby's account and her own, rather reſolve to conquer than endeavour to indulge: ſhe believed, however, that if once ſome reſolution was formed as to her future reſidence, ſhe ſhould be eaſier herſelf, and be better able to ſatisfy Wil-

Willoughby. To this ſubject, therefore, ſhe turned her thoughts and examined with a heavy heart ſeveral different plans that offered themſelves to her mind.

Nothing could be more comfortleſs than her reflections: ſhe was not only an orphan, and a ſtranger in England, but knew not whether there was in the world any being whoſe protection ſhe had the remoteſt right to claim.

Lady Molyneux had never written to her ſince their ſeparation, and even if Willoughby, ſhould approve of her again ſeeking the protection of his ſiſter, which ſhe had great reaſon to doubt, ſhe knew not whether Matilda and her huſband would receive her; and from that want of heart ſhe had too often diſcovered in them both, ſhe could not think of making the experiment. She had no intimacy with any other perſon; for though many of the families ſhe had been accuſtomed to viſit while Mrs. Willoughby lived, had daughters, who had cultivated an acquaintance with her, ſhe had already ſeen enough of the general conduct of the world to know that ſhe ſhould now be no longer an acceptable gueſt, and that an individual to whom court is made aſſiduouſly, while ſhining as an equal among faſhionable circles, is ſoon forgotten; or if remembered, deſpiſed, when thoſe adventitious advantages ſurround her no longer. She had heard from Vavaſour, for Willoughby himſelf had always carefully avoided the ſubject, that the ſudden deſertion of Miſs Fitz-Hayman, to whom Willoughby was ſuppoſed to be ſo firmly engaged, and his reſolution of marrying his mother's

adopted

adopted daughter, had been very much talked of in the extenſive circle, who were connected or acquainted with the family: ſhe could not doubt but that their ſudden ſeparation on the very eve of their marriage was as generally known; and had ſhe found any temptation to return to the ſociety ſhe had quitted, this painful certainty, the prying curioſity that would be excited, and the malicious conjecture that would be made, would effectually have counteracted it.

Towards evening ſhe found ſufficient courage to entreat Mr. Thorold's attention for half an hour.

He came to her immediately, and ſhe put into his hands the letter ſhe had received from Willoughby.

He read it with great attention, and as it ſhould ſeem with great concern, and then in the expreſſive manner that was uſual with him, gave it back to her without ſpeaking.

Benevolence and pity were now viſible in his features, which were maſculine, ſtrong, and frequently ſtern; but Celeſtina was hardly enough accuſtomed to him to underſtand his ſilence completely.

"You ſee, dear Sir" ſaid ſhe timidly—"you ſee that Willoughby refers me to you, and I would very fain avail myſelf of the benefit of your advice."

"It is always at your ſervice, replied Mr. Thorold; "but on what occaſion do you now aſk it?"

"I wiſh to know," replied ſhe with ſtill greater heſitation, "what you think it adviſable for

for me to do? where you think I ought to ſettle myſelf?"

"I am ſorry," anſwered he, "you think it ſo ſoon neceſſary to turn your thoughts that way. I hoped that you would ſtay here at leaſt for ſome weeks; and really I can give you no other advice than to do ſo. The myſtery which I cannot develope, may by that time be removed, and we ſhall have time not only to hear more of Willoughby, but if nothing occurs on his part to re-eſtabliſh you at Alveſtone, to caſt about for a proper and permanent ſituation for you: think no more, therefore, my dear ward, for ſuch I conſider you, of leaving us at preſent, and rather exert your admirable underſtanding in quieting your ſpirits, and in acquiring fortitude to bear adverſity and evil, if they ſhould be finally your portion; or equality of temper to enjoy, what it is more difficult to enjoy, well——happineſs and proſperity."

Celeſtina would now have ſpoken of the inconvenience to which ſo long a viſit might put his family, and the litle claim ſhe had to ſuch unuſual kindneſs from him and Mrs. Thorold; but he ſuffered her not to continue theſe apologies, ſeemed little pleaſed that ſhe attempted to make them; and then re-aſſuming his good humour, he left her, bidding her try to recover her looks, and to diſmiſs as much as ſhe could from her mind the diſtreſſing events of the laſt ten days.

Celeſtina now found that ſhe could not immediately remove without offending the friend to whom Willoughby had recommended her, and prepared

prepared, ſince ſhe could not be indulged with ſolitude, to mix with his family, and be as little as poſſible a weight on thoſe, who, whatever might be their good humour, could not be expected to enter into her ſorrows; the next morning therefore at breakfaſt ſhe joined Mrs. Thorold, her daughter, and her two ſons, to both of whom ſhe was immediately introduced, and from whoſe ſcrutinizing looks ſhe ſought refuge in talking with forced cheerfulneſs to Arabella.

Captain Thorold was the eldeſt of the family, and Montague the youngeſt. The former of theſe young men had been adopted by his uncle, who after a life paſſed in the army, had died a general officer at a very advanced age, and had left his nephew his whole fortune, which was near fifteen hundred a year, after the death of his wife, who ſurviving him only a twelvemonth, Captain Thorold had now been ſome time in poſſeſſion of his eſtate, and of a conſiderable ſum of money.

But accuſtomed from his infancy to the unſettled life of a ſoldier, he ſtill continued it from habit and choice; and though his father and his family were very ſolicitous to have him marry and ſettle near them, he ſeemed to have no inclination to reſign his freedom for the pleaſures of domeſtic ſociety. Novelty and amuſement were his purſuits, and his fortune gave him the power to indulge himſelf. He had what is generally called a very handſome perſon; but without his military air, his figure would have been rather eſteemed clumſy than graceful. He had lived

lived much among the circles who give the ton, dreſſed well, and had that ſort of underſtanding which recommended him to general ſociety, and particularly to that of the ladies, with whom he was an almoſt univerſal favourite, and who had agreed to call him the handſome Thorold, even before he became poſſeſſed of a fortune, which in the opinion of moſt of the belles at country quarters, and ſtill more in the opinion of their mothers, more than redoubled his attractions. Thus ſpoiled from his firſt entrance into life, he had learned to conſider himſelf as irreſiſtible, and ſuppoſed every woman he ſaw his own, if he choſe to take the trouble of ſecuring her.

His air and manner were tinctured with the conſequence he derived from this perſuaſion; and from having indulged himſelf in the cruel vanity of extenſive conqueſt, he was incapable of any laſting or ſerious attachment. At the firſt public meeting at any town he happened to be quartered at, he elected ſome goddeſs of the day; with her he danced, he walked, he rode, he coquetted; and by ſtudied looks, and tender ſpeeches, ſoon perſuaded the inexperienced girl, that ſhe had ſecured in her chains the handſome Thorold.

The deluſion of the young woman herſelf, and the envy of the cotemporary belles, ſometimes laſted till the removal of the corps to another ſtation: when he took a cold farewel, and left her to ſuffer all the pain of diſappointed love and mortified vanity: but he not unfrequently indulged himſelf in witneſſing the diſtreſs this wanton

wanton folly inflicted; and after ſome days of attention ſo marked and unequivocal as to give the lady reaſon to ſuppoſe an abſolute declaration of his paſſion was certainly to be expected, he ſuddenly broke off the acquaintance, pretended to forget their intimacy, bowed to her when they met with the air of a ſtranger, and beginning the ſame career with ſome other pretty girl of the place, he affected to treat with diſdain and wonder the reports he had himſelf raiſed of his permanent attachment to the firſt lady, and laughed with her rival at the melancholy moping looks, or glances of angry diſappointment, of the deſerted beauty, declaring himſelf amazed at her having the vanity to ſuppoſe him ſerious, becauſe he had ſhewn her a few trifling attentions which meant nothing.

This conduct of his ſon had given Mr. Thorold great uneaſineſs a few years before, but lately, as he had been in Ireland, and in very diſtant quarters, his father had heard no more of it, and flattered himſelf that now, at near thirty, this unſettled temper and unjuſtifiable levity would end in his marrying and quitting the army. But though a very fond father to all his children, Mr. Thorold loved the Captain leſs than the others; partly perhaps becauſe he was ſo early removed from him, and rendered independent of his care, and partly becauſe his temper and diſpoſition reſembled not his own; while Mrs. Thorold doated on her eldeſt ſon, whoſe figure and fortune gratified her vanity, and whom ſhe thought no young woman could poſſibly deſerve, unleſs

unleſs ſhe poſſeſſed at once fortune, beauty, and faſhion.

Montague Thorold, who was but juſt turned of one and twenty, and was deſigned by his father for the church, was as modeſt and unaſſuming as his brother was arrogant and pretending. He was a very good ſcholar, with a paſſion for poetry, and was juſt of the age to be in love with every handſome woman he ſaw; and without having the courage to ſpeak to any of them in proſe, he celebrated his divinities in verſe, and ſighed forth his tender ſentiments in ſonnets and elegies, which enriched the magazines, and now and then the public prints, under the fictitious names of Alphonſo or Lyſimachus.

Such were the two young men who were now added to the tea table of Mrs. Thorold, where all the family were aſſembled except Mr. Thorold himſelf, who always breakfaſted early and then went out to his farm or among his pariſhioners.

Mrs. Thorold had told her ſons that a young lady was viſiting at the houſe, whoſe hiſtory ſhe had given them in ſhort hand, deſcribing her as a dependant on the late Mrs. Willoughby, whom her ſon had very ſimply intended to marry at Alveſtone; but the evening before the appointed wedding day had broken off the match, from prudential motives as ſhe ſuppoſed, and by the advice of ſome of his friends who had come down from London.

This was the idea Mrs. Thorold had herſelf conceived of the affair, and ſhe had no means of being undeceived; for Mr. Thorold, who knew

that

that with her a command was better than an argument, and whoſe authority was pretty firmly eſtabliſhed, had ordered her poſitively to aſk no queſtions of his gueſt, and had peremptorily refuſed to anſwer thoſe ſhe put to himſelf. She obeyed, but not without many murmurs; but knowing that Mr. Thorold would be much diſobliged by her refuſal to entertain Celeſtina with kindneſs, had put a reſtraint upon herſelf, and ſhewed her hitherto much civility, though not without many complaints to Arabella, when they were alone, of her father's abſurdity in forcing people into the family, and refuſing even to ſatisfy her who and what they were, or what claim they had to the kindneſs he exacted for them.

From his mother's ſketch of their viſitor the evening before, Captain Thorold had very little curioſity to ſee her; and Montague, whoſe heart was in one of its moſt violent paroxſims of love for the fair daughter of an attorney at Henly, with whom he became acquainted about a fortnight before, was occupied in compoſing an elegy on abſence, and thought he could with indifference have beheld at that period Helen herſelf: he had enquired of his mother and ſiſter if their gueſt was handſome: Mrs. Thorold anſwered—"No, not at all handſome in my opinion;" and Arabella ſaid—"yes, ſurely, Mama, ſhe is rather pretty-iſh."

On her entering the room, however, both the gentlemen were inſtantly of an opinion very different from that of their mother and their ſiſter: yet Celeſtina had not now that dazzling complexion,

ion, or that animated countenance, which were once ſo dangerous to behold; ſhe was pale and languid; her eyes had all their ſoftneſs, but their luſtre was diminiſhed; and the enchanting ſweetneſs which uſed to play about her mouth was now ſupplied by a melancholy ſmile, the effect of a faint effort to conceal the anguiſh of the heart.

Such as ſhe now appeared, however, the Captain thought her very lovely; and Montague almoſt inſtantly forgot the nymph for whom he had been dying in ſong all the morning, and ſaw in the intereſting languor of Celeſtina—in her faded cheek, and downcaſt eyes, a ſentimental effect, which none of the fair creatures whom he had celebrated had ever ſo eminently poſſeſſed: but if ſuch were his ſentiments before he ſpoke, his admiration aroſe to extravagance, when, after breakfaſt, his ſiſter engaged her in a walk in which the two gentlemen attended them, and when he found that her mind correſponded with the elegance of her form; that ſhe was very well read, had a taſte for poetry, and underſtood Italian, of which he was enthuſiaſtically fond. Captain Thorold, on whom theſe advantages made leſs impreſſion, was not quite pleaſed during this walk with the unuſual talkativeneſs of his brother, who generally ſuffered him to take the lead in converſation. He now attempted to put by him two or three times, and to relate anecdotes of people in high life: of what General Wallace ſaid to him at Dublin Caſtle upon his introduction to the Ducheſs of——, and of a bon mot of Lady Mary Marſden's at ſupper one evening;

ing; but Celeſtina, who cared nothing about the General, the Ducheſs, or Lady Mary, let the converſation drop without expreſſing any pleaſure in it, and again lent her attention to Montague, who deſired her to correct his accent while he repeated—

"O primavera, gioventu dell' anno—"

Celeſtina modeſtly aſſured him ſhe was incapable of correcting him; but he beſought her ſo earneſtly to recite the lines to him, that ſhe inconſiderately attempted it, and in the moſt enchanting accents began—

"O primavera gioventu dell' anno,
"Bella madre di fiori
"D'erbe novelle e di novelli amori:
"Tu torni ben—ma teco
"Non tornano i ſereni
"E fortunati dì delle mie gioje:"

The cruel remembrance that now preſſed upon her heart made her voice tremble, and gave it additional tenderneſs. She tried to recover it; and going into a lower tone, went on with—

"Tu torni ben—tu torni
"Ma teco altro no torna
"Che del perduto mio caro teſoro
"Lo rimembranza miſera e dolente."

She

She could go no farther: the tears were in her eyes; but ſhe tried to ſmile, and to ſtifle the deep ſigh that was riſing as ſhe ſaid—"I cannot go on, for really I remember no more."

The young man, faſcinated by her manner and her voice, now recollected—with reluctance recollected, that theſe ſeducing tones were drawn forth by the reality of thoſe ſufferings the poet deſcribed. He looked at her in ſilence; and as he marked the ſad and penſive expreſſion that remained on her countenance, that aſtoniſhment which he had hardly time to feel before, aroſe: he thought it impoſſible that Mr. Willoughby, having the power to marry ſuch a woman, and having once formed the reſolution to do ſo, ſhould by any perſuaſions be diverted from his purpoſe; and he found that in the ſingle hour he had been with her, he admired her enough to ſacrifice every thing to her, were it poſſible that her regard could be transferred to him. The improbability that it never could, ſtruck him forcibly, and rendered him as ſilent as Celeſtina herſelf; while the Captain, who had now an opportunity of engroſſing her attention, rallied her on being ſo much affected. "I have no notion now," ſaid he, "of giving way to thoſe ſort of things. I love gay and cheerful poetry. One is tired of weeping at the fictitious miſery of fictitious perſons. I remember being ſome time ago at a converſation in Dublin, where we talked of the faſhionable indifference which every body has now for tragedy; and my friend Hargrave, who has written, you know, ſeveral things himſelf, was condemning it as the certain marks of the

the vitiated taſte and imbecility of the age: I took up the argument on the other ſide; and Lady Mary Marſden thought as I did. Indeed every body preſent allowed that it was quite abſurd to go to a play, which is intended to amuſe and entertain, only to be made uneaſy. She agreed with me that people have concern enough in real life, and need not go ſeek it in way of diverſion."

"And did her Ladyſhip," enquired Montague Thorold, "give no other reaſons?"

"I think thoſe are very good reaſons," replied the Captain.

"They might be ſo," anſwered his brother, "for a woman of faſhion; but I am perſuaded literary people and people of taſte think quite otherwiſe; and the ancients, whoſe ſuperior intellectual advantages are not to be diſputed——"

"Oh prithee Montague," interrupted the Captain, "don't run us down with college cant. I am talking of the world we live in; and the opinions of people who lived two thouſand years ago are no more in queſtion, now than their dreſſes." He then went to retail other opinions of Lady Mary Marſden, who was, as it ſeemed, the oracle of the hour in the ſociety he had juſt left. Celeſtina heard him with apparent attention, but in truth without knowing what he ſaid; his brother, rendered impatient by being interrupted in his converſation with her, walked away; and Arabella, who loved to hear deſcriptions of fine people, and to attend the faſhionable converſation, kept up the dialogue till the end of their walk;

walk; when Celeſtina went to her own room, Arabella to her dreſſing table, and the Captain, finding his mother at work in the parlour, thought he had a right to aſk her a few queſtions about Celeſtina, in return for the perpetual tone of interrogation ſhe had kept up towards him ever ſince his arrival.

To Mrs. Thorold, the next gratification to that of aſking queſtions was the pleaſure of anſwering them: ſhe told her ſon, therefore, not only all ſhe knew, but invented anſwers on ſome points which ſhe only gueſſed at; and he underſtood, from her information, that Celeſtina had been very partial to Willoughby; and ſo ſtrong was this partiality deſcribed, that he began to doubt whether the propoſed marriage had not been a mere fineſſe to throw her off her guard, and get her wholly into his power; and whether his abrupt departure had not been in conſequence of the ſucceſs of this diſingenuous but not unprecedented method of proceeding.

Captain Thorold had ſeen Willoughby frequently in his laſt viſit at home, and knew that he had every advantage which a fine perſon and engaging manners could give him; he was well acquainted with the ſociety among which he lived, and had heard ſome of them, but particularly Vavaſour, deſcribed as being very gay and unprincipled; he had therefore little difficulty in ſuppoſing that Willoughby reſembled thoſe with whom he aſſociated, and that Celeſtina had been the victim of thoſe arts which he ſuppoſed no man ever ſcrupled to practiſe where the object was ſo well worth the trouble; eſpecially one ſo

unprotected as she was, where no rigid father was in the way to obstruct their designs, or Chamont-like brother to avenge the wrong they might commit. Willoughby now, however, seemed quite out of the question; and he doubted not, but that after a short interval given to sentimental regret on the loss of a first lover, she would listen to other vows, and encourage the passion, which he thought it might be very amusing to entertain her with, without meaning however to offer himself to fill such engagements as Willoughby had broken. While he meditated on this project, he could not help smiling at the cullibility of his father, who had thus, he thought, taken into his protection, and made the companion of his wife and daughter, the deserted mistress of Willoughby.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE following morning Cathcart was early at the houſe of Mr. Thorold; and Celeſtina, who roſe now earlier than uſual, (to enjoy, if it could be called enjoyment, a few hours, before ſhe was compelled to hide her ſorrows under the appearance of attention to the family ſhe was with) met him as he came from the ſtable; and inſtead of going into the houſe, ſhe deſired he would walk with her towards the village. "You "have news for me," ſaid ſhe; "but if I may gueſs by your countenance none that will relieve the weight I feel on my heart"

"I am afraid not," replied he: "yet indeed I have nothing to ſay that ſhould encreaſe it. Mr. Willoughby is well; he writes to me with more cheerfulneſs than I expected, and aſſures

me that he has a long letter for you, which he ſhall ſend from Dover, where he ſhall finiſh it."

"From Dover! He is then ſet out on this expedition. Ah! Cathcart! and ought not ſuch intelligence to add to my concern?"

"Not at all," replied Cathcart. "You knew before that it was his intention; and he tells me that on the event of this journey depends his ever ſeeng Alveſtone again. There is certainly a chance of its terminating favourably: at all events, if this abſence is to end your ſuſpenſe, you ſhould not only ſubmit to it, but endeavour, my dear Miſs De Mornay, to keep up both your health and ſpirits."

"Alas! Cathcart," anſwered Celeſtina, "there is nothing ſo eaſy to the happy as to give ſuch advice, nothing ſo difficult to the wretched as to take it,"

She then enquired into the other particulars contained in Willoughby's letter; and after informing herſelf of the day when he expected to be at Dover, and how long it might probably be before ſhe ſhould receive the letter he promiſed her, ſhe turned the converſation on Jeſſy, whom ſhe expreſſed an eager wiſh to ſee: and ſoon after Montague Thorold, who impatiently watched her wherever ſhe went, came to tell her that his mother waited breakfaſt for her.

Cathcart, however, declined the invitation to breakfaſt with them, and wiſhing Celeſtina a good morning, and promiſing to be with her again in a day or two, he went in ſearch of Mr. Thorold,

Thorold, with whom he ſaid he had ſome buſineſs.

Many ſucceeding days paſſed without any intereſting event. The Captain took every occaſion to impreſs on Celeſtina an idea of his conſequence, and the faſhionable ſtyle he lived in, to which ſhe gave very little attention; while his brother, whenever he left him an opportunity, talked to her of books, or read to her paſſages in favourite authors of which he heard her expreſs approbation: ſhe was prevailed upon to ſing duets with Arabella; and he was enchanted with her voice and manner; ſhe ſat down to draw the flowers he gathered for her, while he hung over her in raptures, or held her pallet, or read a botanical deſcription of the plants ſhe was painting.

Captain Thorold rode out occaſionally to viſit ſuch of the neighbouring families as he conſidered worth his attention; Arabella was often of his party, and Mrs. Thorold engaged in domeſtic concerns; and then if Celeſtina could not eſcape to her own room before Montague, who was always upon the watch for her, could interrupt her, he entreated her ſo earneſtly to walk with him, was ſo obligingly ſolicitous to pleaſe her, and ſeemed ſo mortified when ſhe attempted to excuſe herſelf, that ſhe could ſeldom reſolve to refuſe him her converſation, even when ſhe was moſt willing to be alone; and in the ſimilarity of their taſtes and ſtudies, and in the brotherly, though ſilent ſympathy he appeared to feel for her ſorrows, there was ſomething ſoothing to her ſick heart, which rejected every idea

idea of love but for Willoughby: conſcious of which, and ſuppoſing that no man could conſider her otherwiſe than as deſtined to be his wife, or to die unmarried, ſhe dreamed not that ſhe was granting to young Thorold indulgence fatal to his repoſe.

He was himſelf ſoon aware of the danger, but he courted it: and though he underſtood that the heart of Celeſtina was engaged, he fancied, that without any pretenſions to her love, he ſhould be happier in being admitted to her friendſhip, than the unrivallen affections of any other woman could make him. He was too artleſs, and too proud of his judgment, to attempt to conceal this attachment from his father, who, had Celeſtina been diſengaged, would have preferred her, with her ſmall fortune and uncertain birth, to the richeſt heireſs in the county: but knowing how ſhe was circumſtanced, he ſaw his younger ſon's encreaſing partiality with ſome concern, and took an opportunity, when they were alone, to tell him the real circumſtances of Celeſtina in regard to Willoughby. "I can conſider her," ſaid he, "no otherwiſe than his affianced wife. They are parted by ſome cauſe of which I am ignorant, but which will probably be removed; in the mean time her youth and beauty render her ſituation very dangerous; as from her being a foreigner, an orphan, and probably the natural daughter of ſome perſon of high faſhion in France, who has taken care to deſtroy all evidence of her real family, ſhe is without relations and without protection. Willoughby's father was my old friend. When I was an indigent curate he

gave

gave me a living, which, though I have now, from being poſſeſſed of greater preferment, reſigned, I conſider as my firſt ſtep towards affluence. I am therefore, bound to the family by gratitude, and to young Willoughby I am bound by perſonal friendſhip and eſteem. Except ſomething too much bordering on raſhneſs in his temper, I hardly know any man ſo faultleſs and ſo worthy of regard. He adores Miſs De Mornay, and I am convinced the happineſs of his life depends on their union.

Finding him torn from her for the preſent, at the very moment this union was to take place, I entered at once into all the uneaſineſs that muſt have aſſailed him, and I voluntarily offered my protection to her, which he has ſince acknowledged in a letter to me to be the greateſt kindneſs he could receive. I have promiſed him to continue it as long as ſhe has occaſion for it or will accept it. Do not, therefore, Montague, by any of your eccentricities, make this uneaſy either to her or to me. Don't fancy yourſelf in love with a young woman, who is in fact married. Any other kind of attention or regard you ſhew her will oblige me; but let us have no making love, unleſs you would drive her away and greatly diſoblige me."

The young man readily promiſed what at the moment he was ſincere in, that he would not make love to Celeſtina; but he did not promiſe not to feel the paſſion, againſt which it was too late already to guard him.

Mr.

Mr. Thorold however ſuppoſed, that after this explanation there was nothing to fear from the extreme ſuſceptibility of his younger ſon; and for the eldeſt, he was too certain that he had not a heart on which the charms and virtues of Celeſtina, or of any other beautiful and intereſting woman, could make any permanent impreſſion.

He was eaſy therefore in a ſituation which would have made many narrow minded and ſelfiſh parents very much otherwiſe; and did not think the preſence of his two ſons at home, a ſufficient reaſon for withdrawing his generous kindneſs from Celeſtina, to whom he was indeed affectionately attached for her own ſake, to whom he loved to conſider himſelf as a guardian and protector.

Mrs. Thorold, always buſied about the intrigues and ſchemes of the reſt of the world, ſaw not very minutely into thoſe of her own family.

As to her eldeſt ſon, ſhe contemplated him as a ſuperior being, who had a right to marry the greateſt heireſs of the kingdom. She heard him ſpeak ſo often of Lady Marys and Lady Carolines, that ſhe concluded he might have any of them whenever he pleaſed; and had ſet her imagination ſo high as to his merits and his fortune, that ſhe never ſuppoſed he could think of bringing her any other than a titled daughter-in-law.

Celeſtina, whom ſhe looked upon as a creature whoſe title to reſpect was very queſtionable, a dependant from her birth, and now little better than dependant on herſelf, was not a perſon likely to make

make an impreſſion on Captain Thorold; and the prejudice operated on her perſon and her manners. Mrs. Thorold could not ſee that ſhe was handſome, or feel that ſhe was intereſting; and when the attention of young Thorold was very ſtrongly marked towards her, his mother only ridiculed him, telling him that he was never eaſy but when playing the Philander, and that he cared not with whom.

Nothing, therefore, interrupted the progreſs of that ſerious paſſion, which Montague Thorold determined to indulge, and of which Celeſtina was perfectly unconſcious. The more unreſerved flattery and free addreſs of the Captain ſhe knew how to repreſs; and received all his advances with ſo much coldneſs, that his pride waspiqued; and unuſed to the ſlighteſt repulſe, he determined not to brook it from one, who had, in his private opinion, very little right to aſſume dignity or affect diſdain.

The manner he took up towards her in conſequence of theſe opinions, was ſo very diſagreeable to her, that it forced her more than ever into the ſociety of his brother; before whom, though the Captain held him very cheap as a boy and a pedant, he could not well addreſs to her ſuch ſpeeches as he had ventured to utter ſeveral times when he ſeized an opportunity of ſpeaking to her alone, or unheard by the reſt of the family. Whenever, therefore, ſhe was compelled to be below, ſhe contrived to have Montague Thorold ſit next to her, to accept his arm as they walked, and to addreſs her diſcourſe to him: and flattered by this evident preference, he let

no occaſion paſs of proving how happy it made him.

So paſſed heavily for Celeſtina, the days that intervened between that when ſhe laſt ſaw Cathcart, and that on which ſhe expected Willoughby's letter from Dover. The day arrived at length; and Celeſtina, who happened to be ſitting with Arabella and her brothers when the letters were brought, could hardly ſupport herſelf while the Captain took them from the ſervant, and reading the direction of each, threw them acroſs the table, now one to his ſiſter, now one to his brother, and bade Montague carry a third to his father, there was none for Celeſtina, though Cathcart had told her it would be directed to her at the houſe of Mr. Thorold. Of this bitter diſappointment, however, ſhe ſpoke not, but tried to conceal the change it occaſioned in her countenance, and haſtened, as ſoon as ſhe could, to weep alone, over the ſad idea that Willloughby's diminiſhed, perhaps annihilated love, had allowed him to torture her with ſuſpenſe which he might ſo eaſily have avoided by punctuality.

Another almoſt ſleepleſs night was the conſequence of this delay: but though without reſt in the night, Celeſtina roſe as ſoon as day appeared. At no other time but early in the morning ſhe had now any chance of being alone either in the garden or the neighbouring fields, and the air ſeemed neceſſary to her overburthened ſpirits. In the fields, ſhe ſeemed to breathe more freely, and her heart, which often felt as if it would burſt

burſt, was relieved while ſhe was allowed to weep unmarked and uninterrupted.

A narrow road, ſhaded by thick rows of branching elms, led towards the village, which was that way almoſt a mile from the houſe of Mr. Thorold, who did not inhabit the parſonage but an houſe he had built on a farm of his own. Celeſtina, to avoid being ſeen from the windows of the houſe, which commanded the garden and the meadows near it, took her way down this lane. Her thoughts ran over the ſtrange events of the preceding years, in which ſhe had experienced ſo much anguiſh, anguiſh embittered by the tranſient promiſe of ſupreme happineſs. As ſhe reviewed her whole life, it ſeemed to have been productive only of regret. "Why," cried ſhe, "was I ever born? Alas! my exiſtence was the occaſion of miſery to thoſe who gave it me! Why did deareſt Mrs. Willoughby take me from a confinement where I was dead to the world, and where perhaps neglect and hardſhip might long ſince have releaſed me? What will now become of me? If Willoughby forgets me, how ſhall I find courage to drag about a wretched being? uſeful to nobody, for whom nobody is intereſted, and which ſeems marked by heaven for calamity!"

Theſe melancholy reflections led her on, till a turn out of the road brought her to the ſtyle of the church yard. She leant penſively over it, and read the ruſtic inſcriptions on the tomb ſtones. One was that of a young woman of nineteen: it was her own age; and Celeſtina felt an emotion of envy towards the village girl, whoſe

early

early death the rural poet lamented in the inſcription. "Merciful heaven!" cried ſhe, "is early death ever really to be lamented? and ſhould I not be happier to die now than to live; as perhaps I ſhall to be forgotten?" Inſenſibly this idea took poſſeſſion of her fancy; and with her pencil ſhe wrote the following lines in her pocket book, not without ſome recollection of Edwards's thirty ſeventh and forty fourth ſonnets:

SONNET.

Oh thou! who ſleepeſt where hazle bands entwine,
The vernal graſs, with paler violets dreſt,
I would, ſweet maid! thy humble bed were mine,
And mine, thy calm and enviable reſt.
For never more, by human ills oppreſt,
Shall thy ſoft ſpirit fruitleſsly repine:
Thou canſt not now thy fondeſt hope reſign
Even in the hour that ſhould have made thee bleſt.
Light lies the turf upon thy virgin breaſt;
And lingering here, to love and ſorrow true,
The youth, who once thy ſimple heart poſſeſs'd,
Shall mingle tears with April's early dew;
While ſtill for him, ſhall faithful Memory ſave,
Thy form and virtues from the ſilent grave!

Celeſtina, who had a natural turn to poetry, had very rarely indulged it; but ſince ſhe had paſſed ſo many hours with Willoughby, his paſſionate

ſionate fondneſs for it, and his deſire that ſhe ſhould not neglect the talent ſhe had received from nature, had turned her thoughts to its cultivation; and now almoſt the firſt uſe ſhe made of it, was to lament that ſhe lived, ſince none of her acquirements were to pleaſe him, for whom alone ſhe wiſhed to poſſeſs either life or talents.

She had finiſhed her ſonnet, and read it over aloud: ſhe changed a word or two, again read it, and was putting it into her pocket book, when ſhe was ſtartled by the ſight of Montague Thorold, who appeared behind her, though ſhe had not heard him approach. "Do not," he cried, "be offended, deareſt Miſs De Mornay, if I thus break in upon your ſolitude; and do not," continued he, taking her hand, in which ſhe ſtill held the pocket book—"do not puniſh me by putting away what I have ſo earneſt a deſire to hear."

Celeſtina, half angry, replied—"I have nothing, Sir, worth your hearing."

"I have offended you," ſaid he, in the moſt reſpectful tone—"I ſee you are offended. If you knew my heart, you would know how much better I could bear any misfortune than your contempt and anger."

Celeſtina, whoſe ſlight diſpleaſure was already at an end, anſwered with a ſmile, that he certainly deſerved neither: "but come," continued ſhe, "you were ſent I dare ſay to call me to breakfaſt and we are loitering here."

"I was not ſent," anſwered he. "I believe it is yet earlier than you imagine it to be. You are

are not then offended at my interrupting you?

"Oh no! think of it no more," ſaid Celeſtina, wiſhing to change the diſcourſe. "Is it not a delicious morning?"

He anſwered not her queſtion; but fixing his eyes on her's, ſaid—"See how ſoon a ſecond treſpaſs is attempted when the firſt is ſo graciouſly forgiven. *May* I aſk, as the moſt ineſtimable favour, to hear once more the lines you were reciting?"

"Once more!" repeated Celeſtina. "Have you heard them once already then?"

"I will ſay I have *not*, if my acknowledging that I have will diſpleaſe you.

"I do not think," ſaid Celeſtina careleſsly, "that will mend your caſe much: but however the lines were not worth your hearing, and——"

"Every thing you even repeat from another," cried he, eagerly interrupting her, "is worth hearing: how much more worth hearing, when that faſcinating voice is employed in expreſſing the ſentiments of that elegant and lovely mind. Oh! Celeſtina!—But forgive me, Madam; it is preſumption indeed in me to addreſs you ſo freely; yet Celeſtina is the only name in the world that ſeems to me fit for you. The common terms of formal civility are unworthy of you. Let me then call you Celeſtina, not in familiarity, but in veneration, in adoration; and entreat you, implore you to oblige me."

Diſconcerted at his vehemence of manner and extravagance of expreſſion, Celeſtina now thought it better to put an end to ſuch very warm applications,

tions, by ſhewing him the little value in her eyes of the favour he ſolicited. She gave him the paper, therefore, ſaying coldly—"You are anxious for a very trifling matter; and as you have already heard the lines, it is hardly worth the time you muſt give, haſtily written as they are, and with interlineations and eraſures, to make them out."

"Give me then time to do it, cried he, as he kiſſed the paper and put it in his boſom.

Celeſtina, more diſconcerted by his manner than before, ſaid yet more gravely, "I beg I may have them again immediately."

"You ſhall indeed," replied Thorold; "but I muſt firſt read them."

"Read them then now," replied ſhe.

"It is impoſſible," cried he, "for here is Arabella and my mother coming to meet us; and it is the firſt time that being with you, I felt their interruption as a favour."

During this dialogue Celeſtina had walked rather quickly towards the houſe, ſo that they were by this time within ſight of the garden gate, from whence Captain and Miſs Thorold advanced ſlowly towards them. Montague, as if conſcious of the impropriety of what had paſſed, now affected to be talking of indifferent matters; and Celeſtina, ruffled by his wild enthuſiaſm, and eagerly anticipating the letter which ſhe hoped that day would bring her from Willoughby, felt herſelf made uneaſy by the ſteady and enquiring eyes of the Captain, who had acquired a very rude habit of ſtaring people out of countenance. She

was

was compelled however to endure it, not only while breakfaſt laſted, but afterwards when Arabella engaged her aſſiſtance in painting a trimming which was to compoſe the ornament of a gala dreſs for the balls at Tunbridge, whither ſhe was going in June with the eldeſt of her married ſiſters, who was in an ill ſtate of health.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIX.

ARABELLA Thorold, desirous of availing herself of the superior taste and skill that Celestina possessed in such ornamental matter as she was now busy about, the merit of which she knew she might, where she was going, take entirely to herself, now invited her guest to the work-table at which she was employed; Montague took up a book to read to them aloud, while his brother sauntered idly about the room, now praising Celestina's performance, now correcting that of his sister; then humming a tune, looking at his watch, or throwing about the colours or the pencils, he seemed determined to interrupt his brother's reading, and particularly when by Montague's voice and gesture he saw that he hoped particularly to interest and attract

tract the attention of his auditors. This ſcene, of which the painful anxiety of Celeſtina for her letter made her unuſually impatient, was at length put an end to by the entrance of the ſervant from the poſt, and Celeſtina receiving, in trembling agitation, a letter with the Dover poſt mark.—She flew with it to her own room, and read as follows:——

Dover, April 11, 17—.

'The veſſel which is to carry me from England and Celeſtina is now waiting for me; and I have delayed writing to her till this laſt moment; not becauſe I have ever ceaſed to think of her with the warmeſt ſolicitude, but becauſe I have not till now been able to collect courage to bid her a long adieu!

'I am going, Celeſtina, to the South of Europe. Perhaps my ſtay may be very ſhort: perhaps I may, for the reſt of my life, be doomed to be a ſolitary wanderer. But however deſtiny may diſpoſe of *me*, let me entreat you, by all that regard which once made the happineſs of my life, to take care of your health; try to regain your cheerfulneſs; and believe me, Celeſtina, ſtrangely againſt me as appearances are, I have not deſerved to loſe your confidence, nor have I any wiſh ſo fervent as for your happineſs.

'I cannot write to you on pecuniary affairs. Cathcart has, in regard to every thing of that ſort, my full directions. Whenever he and

'Jeſſy

'Jeffy become houſe-keepers for themſelves, you 'will be their welcome gueſt, and my heavy 'heart will be relieved of much of its anguiſh: 'till then, I entruſt you to the care and direction of the excellent friend you are now with: 'may it not long be neceſſary for me to——— 'But I dare not truſt myſelf on this ſubject.— 'Write to me; for now the meaſure I have been 'driven to is adopted, I can hear from you 'without fearing that my reſolution may be ſha-'ken.

'Heaven bleſs and protect you, deareſt Celeſ-'tina! This is the firſt wiſh I form, when, after 'my uneaſy ſlumber, recollection returns in the 'morning, and the laſt before I *attempt* to 'ſleep at night. Alas! it is often only an 'attempt!

'But there is no end of this———Farewel! 'moſt beloved Celeſtina, farewel!

'G. W.'

This letter was if poſſible more unſatisfactory than the laſt. No reaſon was yet given for his having left her, no certainty held out of his return; but all, if not hopeleſs, was ſo comfortleſs, ſo obſcure, that her reſolution to inveſtigate the cauſe of all that happened, again failed. She feared even to attempt putting aſide the fearful veil that was drawn between them. He was now in another country, from whence his return ſeemed uncertain; and ſhe ſeemed the moſt deſolate and forlorn being that exiſted on that

which

which he had left. Her heart ſunk within her in remembring that ſhe might never ſee him more: that he hardly ſeemed to wiſh ſhe ſhould. Again ſhe read his letter over. He was ſleepleſs, reſtleſs, unhappy; and for his ſufferings ſhe wept more than for her own.

The plan he mentioned of her reſiding with the Cathcarts, was the only one to which, ſince their ſeparation, ſhe had looked forward with any degree of ſatisfaction. But that there was yet little probability of executing: for old Winnington was in even better health than he had been for ſome years; and though the tender aſſiduity of Jeſſy had won much even on his inſenſible heart, he ſuffered her to have no authority; and often being ſeized with fits of jealouſy and ſuſpicion that ſhe went to meet and aſſiſt her father, he would inſiſt upon her not quitting him a moment; ſo that ſhe had ſometimes for many days together no opportunity of ſeeing her huſband, and had never once, ſince her ſeparation from Celeſtina, been able to reach her preſent abode. Celeſtina had not been an hour alone, before Montague Thorold tapped at the door.—She dried her eyes, and pulling her hat over them, opened it to him.

"Will you not walk," ſaid he, apologizing however for his intruſion. "I am afraid I diſturb you: but the morning is ſo beautiful; and we are all going to ſee a pond fiſhed, with two friends of my brother's from Exeter, who are juſt come in."

"I cannot indeed," anſwered Celeſtina, "Pray excuſe me."

"I would

"I would not preſs you for the world," ſaid he, "to do any thing that is diſagreeable to you. But the air will be ſurely uſeful to you. You——have been weeping, Miſs De Mornay! and——"

"If I have," replied ſhe, interrupting him, "you may be aſſured, Sir, that I have reaſon enough for my tears, and would wiſh to enjoy them alone."

"Precious tears!" cried he with a deep ſigh. "The letter was from the fortunate Willoughby!"

"Fortunate do you call him?" But Celeſtina, as if offended that any tongue but her's ſhould name him, ſtopped, and turning from the door, went into her own room.

At this moment Arabella ran up ſtairs to fetch her cloak and gloves, and ſeeing her brother Montague at the door of Celeſtina's room, cried, as ſhe paſſed him———"Hey day! are you in waiting as Page or Gentleman Uſher?"

"As neither," anſwered he in ſome confuſion. "I was merely aſking if Miſs De Mornay would walk with us."

"Oh! I dare ſay not," replied his ſiſter, ſmiling maliciouſly as ſhe looked over her ſhoulder at him——"I dare ſay not. Montague, what are you in now? Are you Romeo—"Oh! that I were a glove upon that hand, that I might touch that cheek!" or are you Caſtalio?——"Sweet planted by the hand of heaven grow here." You always make love I know by book. What! ſhall I call Edmund to take the part of Polydore?

Polydore? I think you will make it out among you."

Celeſtina, who had heard this ſpeech, though it was not meant that ſhe ſhould, was equally amazed and hurt at it. It had however a very different effect from what the ſpeaker intended; who having no wiſh that Celeſtina ſhould join them, becauſe ſhe deſired to monopolize the converſation of the two ſtrangers, thought, by rallying her brother, to break off his entreaty.—Montague, mild as he was, was piqued extremely, and would reſentingly have anſwered, if his ſiſter had not immediately diſappeared, and if Celeſtina had not at the ſame moment opened her door, and ſaid—"You compel me, Mr. Montague, to walk whether I will or no."

"Pray forgive me," ſaid he, interrupting her. "I would purchaſe no pleaſure at your expence."

Arabella now returning down ſtairs, was ſurpriſed to ſee her preparing to go. "I thought you declined walking Ma'am," ſaid ſhe formally. Celeſtina made an effort to conquer the reſentment ſhe juſtly felt, and replied coldly, that the morning was ſo pleaſant ſhe thought it would be a pity to loſe it.

Her apprehenſions indeed were, that had ſhe remained at home, Montague, who had perſecuted her the whole day, would have remained alſo; and the hint his ſiſter had given of the rivalry of the brothers had at once ſhocked and amazed her.

After a moment, however, ſhe began to fancy that her ſpeech had more malice than meaning in

in it: but the uneaſineſs of her ſituation, and the neceſſity of ſoon removing from it, recurred to her more forcibly than ever. She endeavoured, as ſhe went down ſtairs, to regain her compoſure, apprehenſive that the ſtrangers, if not the family, might remark her emotion. But ſhe ſoon found that there was little to be apprehended from either the one or the other: Captain Thorold was walking arm in arm before the houſe with Captain Muſgrave, the elder of the two gentlemen, and Miſs Thorold wholly monopolized the attention of Mr. Bettenſon, a very young man, heir to a conſiderable fortune, who had a few months before, on his leaving Eton, purchaſed a Cornetcy of horſe, very much againſt the inclinations of his father, whoſe only ſon he was. He could indeed give no other reaſon for his preference to a military life, but that he ſuppoſed it to be a very idle life, and that he ſhould look uncommonly well in the uniform of the corps.

This however did not ſucceed to his wiſhes, though he was very far from being aware how entirely they had failed. He had a very round back, very narrow ſhoulders, a long forlorn face, to which the feathered helmet gave neither grace nor ſpirit; and the defects of his mean and ill-formed figure were rendered more apparent by that dreſs, which is an advantage to a well-made and graceful man. He had twice danced with Belle Thorold at the provincial aſſemblies towards the end of winter, and now, after having been in town for a few weeks, prevailed on Captain Muſgrave to introduce him to a family, where

where he ſuppoſed he might find a *monſtrous good lounge* for the reſt of the time he was to be quartered in the neighbourhood.

Celeſtina no ſooner ſaw Miſs Thorold's behaviour to this young man, than ſhe accounted at once for the diſſatisfaction ſhe had ſhewn at her joining the party; for ſhe endeavoured by more than her uſual vivacity to monopolize all his attention; ſhe watched with uneaſy curioſity every glance of his eye towards Celeſtina; and ſeeing that he hardly noticed her being among them, and was not ſtruck with that beauty which the Captain and Montague had ſo admired, ſhe preſently re-aſſumed her uſual confidence in her own attractions, and thought only of ſecuring the advantage ſhe had gained.

Celeſtina, not having the remoteſt wiſh to interfere with her conqueſts, and being diſpleaſed and offended at the curious looks and whiſpers of the two other military men, who continued to ſaunter on before, was again under the neceſſity of liſtening to Montague, who never failed ſeizing every opportunity obliquely to hint to her the encreaſing admiration with which ſhe had inſpired him, though he at the ſame time gave her to underſtand that he knew he had nothing to expect but her pity and her friendſhip.

This was however repeated till it became very uneaſy to her; and the more ſo, becauſe ſo reſpectful was his addreſs, that ſhe ſeldom knew how to ſhew reſentment, and ſo ſincere appeared his repentance, when ſhe expreſſed any, that ſhe could not long retain it.

As

As they now followed the reſt of the party, Celeſtina took occaſion to aſk Montague for the paper ſhe had been teized out of in the morning. "I know not," ſaid ſhe, on his evaſive anſwer, "whether my folly in giving it, or your abſurdity in keeping it, be the greater. Pray reſtore it, and let us think no more of ſuch trifling——"

"I will give you," anſwered he, "a copy of it, which I have already began to write; but for the original——" He ſtopped, and ſuddenly ſeizing her hand, preſſed it to his breaſt; where, under his waiſtcoat, the paper was enfolded.—"There," ſaid he——"there is your paper. I have put it next my heart, and never ſhall it be diſplaced unleſs you will give me ſome yet dearer memorial to remain there."

Celeſtina withdrew her hand in confuſion; and feeling more than ever the neceſſity of putting an end to ſuch ſort of conduct, ſhe ſaid, with evident diſpleaſure and concern——"You behave, Mr. Montague, not only improperly in this fooliſh matter, but cruelly and inſultingly towards me, who have, you know, at this time no proper home to receive me; but ſince you thus perſecute me with converſation, from which, though I cannot eſcape, I can only hear with concern and reſentment, I muſt as ſoon as poſſible find another temporary abode, and acknowledging all your father's kindneſs, quit his houſe."

The young man, who, amidſt his wild enthuſiaſm, wanted neither ſenſe nor generoſity, was now ſhocked at her ſuppoſing he meant to inſult

her; and terrified at the idea of her being driven to inconvenience by leaving his father's houſe—"I am always offending," ſaid he, in a voice expreſſive of the concern he felt, "and I am afraid often wrong; but pardon me once more, Miſs De Mornay, pardon and pity me, and I will not again treſpaſs on your patience with diſcourſe which perhaps you ought not to hear; though ſurely the happy Willoughby himſelf would not be alarmed at the hopeleſs admiration of a man——who knows, that he can never pretend to any other than diſtant and humble adoration:——

"It were all one
"That I ſhould love a bright particular ſtar."

He was going on, when Captain Thorold, who had imperceptibly ſlackened his pace, caught theſe words, which were ſpoken in a theatrical tone, and ſtopping with his friend, Celeſtina and Montague were immediately cloſe to them.

"So, Montague," ſaid he, "at the old game. Miſs De Mornay, I barr all quotations. 'Tis not fair for Montague to avail himſelf at once of his own talents, and thoſe of all the poets and ſonnetteers he is acquainted with."

"He will avail himſelf of neither, Sir," anſwered Celeſtina, "and I aſſure you, I wiſh our converſation to become more general."

"There, Montague," cried the Captain, you ſee you have tired Miſs De Mornay in your tete-a-tete;

a-tete; let us ſee if Muſgrave and I cannot more ſucceſsfully entertain her.

Celeſtina, who did not promiſe herſelf much advantage from the change, ſince Captain Thorold's addreſs to her was often as warm as his brother's, but never ſo reſpectful, now haſtened forward to join Miſs Thorold; but ſhe received no notice either from her or her little military beau: they were by this time however near the end of their walk, and were met by the family of Mr. Cranfield, to whom the pond belonged which they were to ſee fiſhed. The children, ſeveral fine boys, now at home for their Eaſter-holy-days, were aſſembled round it eager and delighted.

Montague, who was a great favourite in the neighbourhood, was engaged in talking with their mother and with them; while their father having civilly noticed the whole party, entered into converſation with the gentlemen; and Miſs Thorold and Mr. Bettenſon ſtill continuing to entertain each other, regardleſs of every body elſe, Celeſtina, who was fatigued by her walk, and ſtill more by the uneaſineſs of her reflections, ſat down under one of the trees which overſhadowed the pond; and her thoughts, which had long been diſtracted by interruptions, were immediately with Willoughby. So intirely indeed was ſhe for ſome moments abſorbed in reflection, that though ſhe ſaw objects moving before her, and heard the ſhouts of the boys, the mixed voices of the party who ſurrounded the water, and the ſervants who were drawing the nets, ſhe totally forgot where ſhe was, and was

inſenſible even of the want of common politeneſs which the whole party evinced, in ſo entirely neglecting her. Montague however, could not long be guilty of it; but diſengageing himſelf from Mrs Cranfield, who was one of thoſe inceſſant talkers from whom it is difficult to eſcape, he came towards her; and fearful of renewing the diſpleaſure ſhe had ſo forcibly expreſſed a quarter of an hour before, he only named his fears that ſhe might receive injury by ſitting on the graſs; to which, as ſhe gave a cold and reluctant anſwer, he added a deep ſigh, and then leaning againſt the tree under which ſhe ſat, he fell into a reverie as deep as her own. From this mournful ſilence ſhe was rouſed by the ſudden appearance of an horſeman, who rode very faſt near her, and who, on lifting up her eyes, ſhe immediately diſcovered to be Vavaſour.

A thouſand painful ſenſations aroſe on the ſight of him; though the firſt idea that occurred was, that he came from Willoughby. He paſſed her, however, without ſeeing her, and reaching the party who were beyond her, he gave his horſe to his ſervant and joined them.

By the manner in which Vavaſour addreſſed Mr. Cranfield, and the manner in which he was received by him, Celeſtina immediately underſtood that he was an expected gueſt. "He comes not to me," ſaid ſhe. "Willoughby ſends no friend to me! He is far, far off! and perhaps his moſt intimate acquaintance may now ſhun as aſſiduouſly as he once ſought me." Then the fears ſhe had once entertained that ſome difference of opinion had occaſioned a quarrel between him and

and Willoughby recurred to her; and remembering how different her ſituation had been when he abruptly left Alveſtone, and how very cruel was the change, ſhe grew diſtreſſed at the thoughts of meeting Vavaſour; and meeting him before ſo many ſtrangers: ſhe again repented having walked out, and her ſoul ſickened at the many uncomfortable occurrences to which ſhe was continually expoſed.

In a few moments, Vavaſour, who ſeemed to have loſt none of his vivacity, had been introduced to the Captain and Miſs Thorold, but he hardly made his bow to them before he ſaid to the latter—"Miſs De Mornay is with you ſtill, Madam; is ſhe not?"

"With us?" replied Arabella. "Oh! yes—Miſs De Mornay is with us."

"She is well I hope?" enquired Vavaſour eagerly.

"You may ſatisfy yourſelf by perſonal enquiry," ſaid Mrs. Cranfield, "for there is the young lady. She and Mr. Montague really form a very picturesque appearance."

Vavaſour, now turning his eyes on the oppoſite ſide, ſaw Celeſtina, and inſtantly advanced towards her with an eagerneſs of manner which he took no pains to check. She aroſe on his approach; and hardly knowing how to receive him, ſo various and painful were her ſenſations, ſhe held out her hand to him, then withdrew it; and when he ſpoke to her with all that good humour with which he uſed to approach her in her happier days, it brought thoſe days back to her mind ſo forcibly, that ſhe could not conquer her

her emotion, and burſt into tears. Vavaſour was immediately checked; and ſaid, with evident concern—" My dear Miſs De Mornay, the pleaſure I felt in again ſeeing you conquered for a moment the recollection of what has happened ſince we parted laſt."

" It is a ſubject," ſaid Celeſtina, trying to recover herſelf, " on which I cannot now talk: yet——" and ſhe moved a few ſteps forward to eſcape the earneſt looks of Montague Thorold, which were fixed on her face—" yet I cannot help aſking if you have ſeen your friend ſince——"

Vavaſour, walking on with her to avoid the obſervation of the company, ſaid—" Seen him? to be ſure I have: I was continually with him in London all the while he remained there."

Celeſtina now proceeded in ſilence, ſtruck with the idea that Willoughby had certainly acquainted his friend during that time with the reaſon of their abrupt ſeparation. She had not, however, courage to aſk him; but having wiped away the tears which a moment before filled her eyes, ſhe turned them upon him with a look ſo expreſſive of what paſſed in her heart, that Vavaſour, who could not miſunderſtand her, anſwered, as if ſhe had ſpoken to him—" I do not *certainly* know the cauſe of George's very ſudden and extraordinary change of meaſures; but I have reaſon to believe the Caſtlenorths, though how I cannot tell, were the occaſion of it. Though I was with him every day, I had very little converſation with him, for he always affected to be, or really was hurried if I ſaw him in the courſe of the day; or,

or, if towards night, complaining of fatigue, and taking laudanum, without which he ſaid he could not ſleep. When he informed me of his having left you at Alveſtone without accounting for his abſence, he ſaw my aſtoniſhment, and put an end at once to my enquiries by ſaying—'Vavaſour, you know my unbounded confidence in you, and that any thing that related merely to myſelf would be known to you as the firſt friend of my heart; but do not aſk me any queſtions now: I cannot anſwer them truly, and therefore I will not be liable to them: even your friendſhip and zeal can here do me no good.' This," continued Vavaſour, "precluded all enquiry; nor could I obtain any farther ſatisfaction, when a few days afterwards, the very day indeed before he left London, he deſired I would meet him at the chambers of Edwards, our mutual attorney, where, in ſpite of my reſiſtance, he paid me the money which you know I lent him, with the intereſt, with as much regularity as if I had fixed that time for payment; and when I very warmly remonſtrated on the unfriendly appearance this had, beſought him to oblige me by keeping the money, and expreſſed ſomething like reſentment at his conduct, he ſaid, with a ſort of affected calmneſs, and almoſt ſternly—'Vavaſour, I am going abroad. I may die, and I will not leave any thing between us to be ſettled by Lady Molyneux, who would be my heir at law; and do not you,' added he, 'my good friend, get a habit of throwing your four or five thouſands about you, but learn to value money a little more——' And friends a little

leſs,

leſs, ſaid I, interrupting him in my quick way; for that, Willoughby, is the next leſſon I expect to hear from you. This money, however, Edwards ſhall keep till you are quite ſure you do not want it. 'I am already ſure of it,' ſaid he, 'and do beg, my dear Vavaſour, that you will 'immediately pay it into the hands of the perſon 'from whom you borrowed it for my uſe, as the 'only way in which it can now contribute to my 'ſatisfaction.' Willoughby then left me with the attorney, of whom I enquired if he could gueſs where he got the money; Edwards aſſured me he could not, as he knew nothing more of the affair, than that he was that day to pay it at his chambers to me."

This circumſtance ſeemed, in the mind of Celeſtina, to confirm the notion Vavaſour had ſtarted, that the Caſtlenorths were ſomehow or other the cauſe of Willoughby's having left her; yet, as they could have no power over him from affection or friendſhip, their influence, if indeed they poſſeſſed any, muſt ariſe from their riches; and what was ſuch a ſuppoſition but to ſuppoſe him a ſudden convert to mercenary politics, from being generous and diſintereſted even to exceſs, if ſuch noble qualities could ever lean towards error. The mind of Celeſtina no ſooner harboured ſuch an idea than her heart rejected it; but all ſhe heard from Vavaſour tended only to augment her perplexity and her ſorrow, which, as he perfectly underſtood, ſhe ſaw that he would if he could have removed.

Almoſt afraid of aſking any queſtion, where it was eaſy to ſee he could not anſwer without wounding

wounding her, ſhe acquired, after a few moments, reſolution to ſay—" Where, Sir, did you at laſt part from him? What did he then ſay to you?"

" I took leave of him at the hotel where he lodged, and where I had been with him for about an hour before the chaiſe came to the door. He was ſometimes very grave, and even dejected for a few moments, then tried by hurry and buſtle to drive away his dejection. I aſked him why he went to the South of France, where he had been before, rather than to Spain and Sicily, which he had often expreſſed an inclination to ſee: he anſwered, that he had buſineſs in France; 'but 'it is more than probable,' continued he, 'that 'I may ſee Spain and Sicily, or Turkey for aught 'I know, before I returned to England.'

" And did he," enquired Celeſtina mournfully—" did he ſay nothing of me? did he not even mention me?"

" Very often," replied Vavaſour, " for indeed I forced him into the converſation."

" Did there *need force* then?" ſaid Celeſtina in a plaintive tone, and ready to melt into tears.

" Yes," anſwered Vavaſour; " for though I believe he thought of nothing ſo much, he ſeemed frequently unwilling to truſt his voice with your name; and ſometimes, after we had been ſpeaking of you, he ſunk into a gloomy reverie, and reluctantly ſpoke at all. One great object of his ſolicitude was your future reſidence. He ſeemed however very eaſy while you were under

Mr. Thorold's protection. Tell me, are you yourſelf happy in his family?"

"Happy!" ſaid Celeſtina; "*can* I be *happy* any where?"

"Perhaps not juſt now: but you know what I mean when I uſe the common term *happy*. Are you ſatisfied with your reſidence? Do you mean to continue there?"

"I hardly know," ſighed Celeſtina, "what I mean. So heavy, ſo unexpected was the blow that fell upon me, that my ſtunned ſenſes have not yet recovered it; and for happineſs—I am afraid it never can be mine."

"Well, my ſweet friend, though I hope and believe otherwiſe, we will not talk now either of our hopes or fears: but are the family you are with pleaſant people? of whom do they conſiſt?"

"Of Mr. Thorold, to whoſe worth you have heard Willoughby do juſtice, of his wife, his daughter, and, at preſent, of two ſons."

"Yes, I ſee the Captain is among you."

"You know him then?"

"A little. Some friends of mine are acquainted with him. He is a man of great gallantry I have heard, and affects the very firſt world; does he not?"

"Really I hardly know. Yes, I believe he may be that ſort of man."

"Celebrated, I think, for having ſent more young women broken hearted to Briſtol than either Charles Cavendiſh or Ned Hervey. That is the ſort of praiſe that attracts your hearts, while we rattle-headed fellows, who are very honeſt though

though not very refined, who ſay no more than we mean, and addreſs you—not as goddeſſes, only to laugh at you for believing us, but as mere mortal women, are called rakes and libertines and I know not what; as if twenty ſuch careleſs, I had almoſt ſaid harmleſs, lads as we are, do half as much miſchief as one of thoſe plauſible, ſentimental, ſighing ſycophants, who mean nothing but the gratification of their own paltry vanity."

"Bleſs me, Mr. Vavaſour," cried Celeſtina, won a moment from her own anguiſh by this odd remark, "you ſeem as much diſcompoſed as if the redoubtable Captain had ſent ſome favourite of your own to Briſtol."

"No, upon my ſoul—my favourites—I ſpeak pretty plainly you know: *my acquaintance* have in every inſtance *but one* lain among people, not eaſily ſent to Briſtol. Come now don't affect prudery. I tell you though, Celeſtina, that had ſuch a fellow ſent a ſiſter of mine to recover health, ruined by the diſappointment of expectations he had raiſed, I believe I ſhould try if I could not ſtop his career."

"It is fortunate then, perhaps, for the Captain, that you have no ſiſter."

"I may, however, have friends," added he, earneſtly fixing his eyes on the face of Celeſtina —"I may have friends, for whom I may be as much intereſted as I could be for the neareſt relation; and them I would put upon their guard."

"I would very fain miſunderſtand you," ſaid Celeſtina, "becauſe I think you ought to know that, ſituated as I am, I need no ſuch precaution:

or

or you muſt have a mean opinion of me indeed, if, knowing Mr. Willoughby, you can ſuppoſe that ſhe who has once been attached to him, can throw away a thought upon Captain Thorold ?"

" Aye that's true——all very true and very fine; but look ye, my dear Celeſtina, I've no way of judging of others but from myſelf, and (though to be ſure I don't ſpeak from experience in theſe honourable ſentimental ſort of treaties) I am confoundedly afraid that had I been engaged to Helen, and found that by ſome curſed counter ſtroke of fortune her divinityſhip was not to be had, that after a little raving and ſwearing and ſcampering about the world to get her out of my head, I ſhould have fallen in love with—"

" With Andromache," ſaid Celeſtina, helping him to a compariſon, and ſmiling.

" Oh no !" anſwered he, " ſhe was too wiſe and too melancholy for me: your weeping and tragical beauties would make me cry, but never could make me love. Faith I think Briſeis or Chryſeis would have been more to my taſte."

" Or Creſſida perhaps ?"

" Oh ! ſhe would have ſuited me exactly."

" Well Sir !" ſaid Celeſtina, re-aſſuming her gravity, " you undoubtedly follow the golden rule in judging of others; but give me leave to aſſure you that in the preſent inſtance it would miſlead you, and that you are the only man in the world from whom I could liſten to ſuch a ſuppoſition without reſentment. You, however, do not, I know, mean to hurt me."

" No,

"No, that I don't by heaven," cried he, kiſſing her hand, "and ſo do now tell me how and when I can ſee you again."

"I cannot tell; ſince it probably depends on your ſtay in this country."

"That depends then upon you."

"Upon me!"

"Yes, upon you: for I came down with no other intention in the world than to enquire after and ſee you; and for that purpoſe only have conſented to undergo the company of Cranfield and his wife: very good ſort of people indeed, but confounded bores; who have invited me down theſe two years, and whoſe invitation nothing but their being within four miles of Thorold's would have made me accept."

Celeſtina was at a loſs what anſwer to make to this, becauſe ſhe did not know whether he meant to impute his ſolicitude to the care he took of Willoughby's intereſt, or ſimply to his friendſhip for her, for of any warmer intereſt than friendſhip ſhe had not the remoteſt idea. She had, however, no time to anſwer, for Montague Thorold, who had followed them with his eyes ever ſince they parted from the reſt of the company, now came haſtily on towards them to ſay his ſiſter was returning home.

Celeſtina rejoined them immediately; and after Mr. and Mrs. Cranfield and their gueſt had been invited and conſented to dine with the Thorold family the next day, they ſeparated, Vavaſour betraying a violent inclination to attend Celeſtina home, and ſeeming to repreſs it with great difficulty from the habit he was in of doing whatever

ever pleaſed himſelf without conſidering whether what he did was, according to the eſtabliſhed forms of the world, rude or polite. He felt, however, that to quit his hoſpitable friends on the moment of his arrival would be carrying his careleſneſs a little too far; and therefore after lingering as long as he could, he reluctantly left her to Montague Thorold, who had walked ſilently by her for ſome moments, and wiſhed her a good day.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XX.

CELESTINA, in whoſe mind a thouſand painful thoughts had been revived by this interview, was too much loſt in them to attend to Montague Thorold, who ſtill in ſilent dejection walked by her, while his brother was engaged with Arabella and his military friends. Montague had narrowly watched her the whole time ſhe had been converſing with Vavaſour; and, though hopeleſs himſelf, could not ſee her receive another with ſuch an appearance of intereſt as he had remarked towards Vavaſour, without mortification.

"Mr. Vavaſour," ſaid he at laſt, "for that I think is the gentleman's name—Mr. Vavaſour is an old acquaintance of yours?"

"A very

"A very particular friend of Mr. Willoughby's," replied ſhe; "and of courſe a friend of mine."

"A ſingle man I ſuppoſe?"

"I believe ſo," ſaid Celeſtina; "at leaſt I never heard he was married; and you ſee he has not a very ſober, married look"

"No really, very much otherwiſe. But he does not ſeem to have communicated any portion of his gaiety to you."

"I am not indeed greatly diſpoſed to be gay," ſaid Celeſtina; "and ſince I am not merry, would it not be as well to be wiſe. Do Mr. Montague, give me that ſilly paper: its detenſion is uſeleſs to you and diſagreeable to me."

"Pardon me then if for once I am guilty of what offends you. I cannot part with it. But it is my firſt and ſhall be my laſt offence."

"I hope ſo," ſaid Celeſtina very gravely. "The thing is in itſelf of no conſequence, and I wonder you ſhould be ſo childiſhly anxious to keep it."

"Your hands have touched it; your letters are upon it; you compoſed the lines."

"Well, Sir," cried ſhe impatiently, and willing to put an end to a ſpeech to which ſhe feared the Captain might liſten; "ſince you will not give it me or deſtroy it, the only favour I have to aſk is, that you will never ſpeak of it again, either to me or any other perſon."

"A needleſs precaution!" exclaimed he, "a very needleſs precaution is the latter; and, alas! in the former I cannot treſpaſs long, for in a

few

few days, a very few days, I return to Oxford, and I ſhall then be no more liable to excite your diſpleaſure: you will ceaſe to recollect that ſuch a being exiſts."

"No, indeed," ſaid Celeſtina; whoever is dear to Mr. Thorold, to your father, to whom I am ſo much obliged, muſt have a claim to my recollection and my good wiſhes."

"Oh! how cold does that ſound from thoſe lips," ſaid he, "and how little thoſe expreſſive eyes are calculated to talk of mere good wiſhes. They are ſo enchanting when they ſay more, when they look as they did juſt now on Mr. Vavaſour. How I envied him the ſimple "God bleſs you!" and—"Adieu, Mr. Vavaſour," and the look that accompanied them."

"Ridiculous!" cried Celeſtina. "Really, Mr. Montague, the ſtyle to which you have accuſtomed yourſelf deſtroys all converſation. If however that adieu was ſo enviable, I will bid you farewel with quite as much ſincerity. God bleſs you, and adieu, Mr. Montague. They were now very near home, and Celeſtina, haſtening forward, croſſed the garden by a nearer way and reached her own room.

She there began once more to meditate on her ſituation. Every day that ſhe had paſſed at Mr. Thorold's houſe, had encreaſed her deſire to leave it, and ſhe more than ever regretted that ſhe knew not whither to go. Her concern was encreaſed by a note brought to her from the neighbouring village, from whence ſhe had early that morning ſent to her former abode at Thorpe Heath, to enquire

quire whether, if ſhe had occaſion for them, ſhe could again have her former lodgings: the anſwer imported, that the old man and his wife had died within a few days of each other, the week before, and that the houſe now belonged to one of the ſons, who had a large family of his own, and intended to remove into it himſelf, as being more convenient than his former habitation.

This forlorn hope being entirely over, her reflection became more painful, ſince ſhe now knew not one place in the world where ſhe could with propriety go. She had once or twice conſulted Cathcart on the ſubject; who not being aware of the circumſtances, which rendered her preſent abode uneaſy to her, and knowing how much Willoughby deſired her to continue there, rather diſcouraged than promoted any ſcheme for her removal; flattering himſelf, that the time was not far diſtant when her preſence would give, in the opinion of Jeſſy and his own, a charm to the houſe they hoped to call their own.

Celeſtina was well aware of his reaſons for wiſhing her to remain where ſhe was, and did not love to explain her's for deſiring to remove, leaſt ſhe ſhould appear at once faſtidious and vain. She could not relate to Cathcart, what after all might be fancy, that Mrs. Thorold did not love her though ſhe was civil to her; that Miſs Thorold beheld her ſometimes with diſlike and never with friendſhip; and that of the two brothers, the elder often affected to entertain her with converſation, ſuch as, though ſhe could not directly

directly complain of it, ſhe could not hear without being offended and mortified; while the younger never ceaſed purſuing her with declarations of romantic attachment, leſs diſguſting, but equally if not more improper for her to liſten to.

In Mr. Thorold ſhe had always a ſteady friend and a diſintereſted adviſer; but to him ſhe could not ſtate the reaſons that made his houſe uncomfortable and his kindneſs uſeleſs, nor complain that his wife and daughter ſlighted, or his ſons made love to her; and though he poſſeſſed a very uncommon ſhare of diſcernment, he ſeemed determined not to perceive either himſelf.—On no plan of removal, however, could ſhe at preſent determine, and had fixed on nothing but to find an opportunity to hint her diſcontent to Vavaſour, when ſhe was called down to dinner.

The two military ſtrangers were gone; but Celeſtina found they were engaged to dine there the next day with the Cranfield family and Mr. Vavaſour; and Mrs. Thorold, who piqued herſelf above all other things on giving as good entertainments as ſome of her neighbours who kept men-cooks, was ſo impatient to prepare for the dinner of the next day, that ſhe would hardly give herſelf time to eat that of the preſent, but hurried away to her ſtore-room the inſtant the cloth was removed.

Arabella had yet a more important concern to attend to; Mr. Bettenſon had been ſo laviſh of his compliments, which were indeed the only ſort of converſation *he* was at all perfect in, that ſhe

ſhe had no doubt of having made, if not an abſolute conqueſt, at leaſt ſuch an impreſſion on his heart, as another interview would make indelible; and though his extravagant praiſes, and the heavy language of two rolling black eyes, (which in luſtre and ſhape, Montague compared to two pickled walnuts,) had not ſo far blinded the judgment of Arabella but that ſhe ſaw he was extremely weak, ſhe conſidered his great fortune, and that if he could not lead, he would probably ſubmit to be driven, for which ſhe thought ſhe had all poſſible talents, and was ſure ſhe had all poſſible inclination. He had not a title indeed, but was the third or fourth couſin of a man that had; of courſe he was a man of family himſelf; and had he not been ſo; had his birth been mean and his perſon leſs tolerable, his fortune would not have ſuffered her a moment to conſider either, as of any conſequence. But though ſhe entertained a very great inclination, and a very well-grounded hope to ſecure Bettenſon, ſhe had not the leaſt objection to make an experiment at the ſame time on Vavaſour, who had a ſtill better fortune, with a very handſome figure; and who ſhe had heard deſcribed, as one of thoſe agreeable rakes, who are blamed and loved by all their acquaintance.

She had heard too that he declared himſelf not to be a marrying man; the greater therefore would be her glory, ſhould ſhe happen to charm him into other ſentiments; and when ſhe looked in the glaſs ſhe thought nothing more probable.

As to Celeſtina, beſides her engagements with Willoughby, ſhe conſidered her as quite out of the queſtion. Neither Captain Muſgrave or Bettenſon had taken any notice of her, and the latter had declared he thought her far from handſome. Arabella therefore ſaw nothing to impede her ſucceſs; and even fancied, that as ſhe intended to be infinitely lively and entertaining, the melancholy air and penſive face of Celeſtina would produce a contraſt extremely to her advantage. While her mother therefore was buſy with her jelly and cuſtards, Arabella was preparing her artillery againſt the hearts of her expected gueſts; and Celeſtina, who dared not venture out, leaſt ſhe ſhould meet Montague Thorold, who had placed himſelf where ſhe could not eſcape him, remained the whole evening alone in her own room, where ſhe formed a ſketch of the letter ſhe intended to write to Willoughby.

This employment, by fixing her thoughts entirely on the object which broke in upon every other that at any time of neceſſity engaged them, quieted and ſoothed her ſpirits; ſhe forgot every thing but her wiſh to convince him of her unfailing attachment, and to pour out before him a heart that was entirely his own. She determined, however, not to finiſh her letter till after ſhe had talked to Vavaſour; and then recollected that ſhe could not tell Willoughby the reſult of that conference, without aſſigning her reaſons for deſiring to quit a protection, where he had himſelf directed her to remain. This was an irkſome taſk to her; for if he ſhould happen to think her objections frivolous, he would be diſpleaſed that for thoſe ſhe romoved, and if he thought them juſt,

the

the idea of rivalry would add to the uneaſineſs which ſhe knew her unſettled ſituation would occaſion to him. Thus undetermined, ſhe could reſt on nothing but the hope that Vavaſour might, from his diſlike to one or other of the Thorolds, (for he was too frequently extremely faſtidious and diſliked with all his heart) agree with her in the neceſſity there was for her change of abode, without enquiring into all the reaſons that made her deſire it.

By the buſtle ſhe heard below in the houſekeeper's room, which was under part of her's, and by the frequent running up and down of Arabella's maid, and the univerſal hurry of the houſehold, except Mr. Thorold, who on theſe occaſions retired to his ſtudy for the evening, Celeſtina found ſhe ſhould rather accomodate than offend if ſhe declined ſupping below. She ſent down a note therefore, ſaying ſhe was much fatigued with her morning's walk, and begged to be excuſed for the evening, and received a verbal anſwer that Mrs. Thorold deſired ſhe would do as was moſt agreeable to her. Montague, however, who deſpairing of her coming out to walk, had at laſt ſauntered away alone, no ſooner found on his return that he was not to ſee her at ſupper, than he went up himſelf, and tapping ſoftly at the door, enquired if ſhe was not well?

"Oh! perfectly well," ſaid ſhe, "but tired by my walk of this morning, and not diſpoſed to eat any ſupper."

"Surely," cried he, "if you are tired you will need ſomething. You did not drink tea, and yet

yet will have no ſupper: let me get ſomething for you?"

Celeſtina declined this however as politely as ſhe could; but Montague was not to be repulſed ſo eaſily. He went down therefore, and returning in a few minutes, beſought her to open the door and take ſome of the wine and water he had brought her. Diſtreſſed by civility, which it ſeemed ſo rude to refuſe and ſo painful to accept, ſhe heſitated a moment, and then opened the door, when taking one of the glaſſes ſhe thanked him and would have wiſhed him good night; but he looked earneſtly in her face—"Ah!" ſaid he, "tears! you have been weeping again! always in tears! You have been writing too—writing to the fortunate Willoughby?"

"Pray dont teaze me ſo," cried Celeſtina: "if I have cauſe for tears, you ſhould remember that the greateſt kindneſs you can do me is permitting me to indulge them; and it ſignifies not who I write to."

"It ſignifies no more indeed," ſaid Montague, with a deep drawn ſigh, "than as it excites my envy and my regret."

"Well, well, good night to you," interrupted Celeſtina. "Pray dont let me keep you from ſupper."

"Oh ſaid he, putting his foot within the door ſo as to prevent her ſhutting it. "I have had my ſupper. One look ſuffices me:

"Look

" Looſe now and then
" A ſcatter'd ſmile, and that I'll live upon." *

Ah! you remember thoſe delicious lines of that moſt elegant of our Engliſh poeteſſes.

" It is to be all bathed in tears;
" To live upon a ſmile for years;
" To lie whole ages at a beauty's feet;
" To kneel, to languiſh, to implore,
" And ſtill, tho' ſhe diſdain, adore.
" It is to do all this, and think thy ſufferings ſweet." †

Shall I go on? for the whole of that beautiful ſong is exactly deſcriptive of my feeelings:

" It is to hope, tho' hope were loſt,
" Tho' heaven and earth thy paſſion croſt."

But you are angry?"

" I am at leaſt tired," ſaid Celeſtina, " and muſt beg you would no longer detain me."

" Give me your hand then in token that we part in peace.

* Shakeſpeare.

† Mrs. Barbauld.

Ma poi di pace in pegno
La bella man mi diè.†

"There, Sir," ſaid Celeſtina coldly, "there is my hand, and now good night."

"Oh that I dared ſeal my forgiveneſs upon it," cried he, eagerly preſſing it. "But I dare not."

Celeſtina withdrew her hand, and again repeating a cold good night, he at length permitted her to ſhut the door.

Theſe frequent declarations, which ſhe could not affect to miſunderſtand, greatly diſturbed her; and ſo well aware was ſhe of the impropriety of ſuffering them, that ſhe was determined no conſideration ſhould induce her to remain another week, if Mr. Montague was not really returning within that time to Oxford. She had heard him repeatedly laughed at by his father, his brother, and his ſiſter, for his paroxyſms of love: if his preſent attention to her was only a return of the fit, ſhe felt herſelf degraded by being made the object of it; and if it was more ſerious, ſhe thought herſelf to blame to ſuffer his aſſiduities, on account of his father, though ſhe knew not very well how to put an end to them. Much leſs appearance of paſſion would have made many young women believe him ready to take the lover's leap, or to apply laudanum or gunpowder as a remedy; but Celeſtina, though not unconſcious of her perſonal advantages, had none of that

† Metaſtaſio.

overweening vanity which make ſo many of inferior atractions fancy themſelves irreſiſtible, nor any of that unfeeling coquetry, which would be gratified by the deſpair of a man capable of real attachment: ſhe wiſhed to put an end to Montague's perſecuting admiration both for his ſake and her own; and after ſome reflections, concluded, that it would be better to take an opportunity of ſpeaking to him the next day, and declaring to him that his extravagant behaviour would compel her to quit the houſe and loſe the acqaintance of his family; for ſhe thought, notwithſtanding all his romantic flights, he had ſo much good ſenſe, that he would ſee the impropriety and indeed the cruelty of his conduct, if it were once fairly repreſented to him. She now almoſt repented that ſhe had not liſtened with more patience to the boaſting egotiſm of the Captain, and had taken ſhelter from his equivocal compliments in the more agreeable becauſe more literary converſation of Montague; and again ſhe reflected with bitterneſs of heart, that whether Montague went or ſtayed, his brother's character, and indeed his manners towards her, made her remaining where ſhe was extremely improper; yet that no eligible ſituation offered: and for the firſt time, ſince ſhe had left Lady Molyneux, ſhe formed a half wiſh to be again with her, though ſhe knew ſhe had there little kindneſs and no real friendſhip to expect.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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